

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN RUBAVU DISTRICT, RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural projects play a significant role in promoting food security, employment creation, and poverty reduction in Rwanda, particularly in rural districts such as Rubavu. However, many agricultural projects experience performance challenges due to internal conflicts arising from resource allocation disputes, leadership disagreements, poor communication, and limited transparency. This study assessed the effect of conflict management strategies: avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District, Rwanda. Guided by the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI Model) and Goal-Setting Theory, the study adopted a mixed-method research design integrating descriptive and correlational approaches. The target population consisted of approximately 24,525 individuals involved in agricultural projects in Rubavu District, from which a sample of 378 respondents was selected using stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques; 333 (88%) fully completed and returned questionnaires. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides and analysed in SPSS Version 28. Instrument validity was confirmed by a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.85, and reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.79 to 0.86 per construct (overall $\alpha = 0.85$). Findings revealed that avoidance strategy had a strong positive effect ($R^2 = 0.513$, $\beta = 0.705$, $p = 0.000$); accommodation had a moderate positive effect ($R^2 = 0.188$, $\beta = 0.466$, $p = 0.000$); compromise showed a moderate positive effect ($R^2 = 0.261$, $\beta = 0.546$, $p = 0.000$); and collaboration had a strong positive effect ($R^2 = 0.307$, $\beta = 0.559$, $p = 0.000$). The combined model explained 58.5% of the variation in project performance ($R^2 = 0.585$, $F = 115.51$, $p = 0.000$), with avoidance as the strongest combined predictor ($\beta = 0.534$), followed by collaboration ($\beta = 0.203$) and compromise ($\beta = 0.131$). Accommodation was not statistically significant in the combined model ($p = 0.353$). The study concludes that effective conflict management, particularly through collaboration, compromise, and strategic avoidance, significantly enhances agricultural project performance. It is

recommended that project managers prioritize collaboration and compromise, apply avoidance strategically, and use accommodation judiciously to maintain harmony while ensuring fairness.

Keywords: *Conflict management, Avoidance, Accommodation, Compromise, Collaboration, Project performance, Agricultural projects.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Agriculture is the backbone of Rwanda's economy, contributing about 25–27% of national GDP and employing more than 65% of the population, especially in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda [NISR], 2023). The Government of Rwanda has invested heavily in agricultural projects under programs such as the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 4) and Vision 2050, focusing on crop intensification, irrigation, land consolidation, post-harvest handling, and market access. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022) reports that well-managed agricultural projects can increase farmer productivity by 20–40% and significantly improve household incomes.

However, conflicts among project stakeholders—arising from land use disagreements, benefit-sharing disputes, leadership misunderstandings, and resource competition—are widely recognized as major threats to project effectiveness. According to Rahim (2020), when conflict is managed properly using strategies such as avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration, it can improve teamwork, innovation, and performance. When conflict is poorly managed, it leads to delays, mistrust, financial losses, and project failure.

In Africa, studies from Kenya and Uganda show that projects using collaborative and compromise approaches recorded better results in terms of productivity and sustainability, while those relying heavily on avoidance experienced reduced efficiency and weak stakeholder participation (Otieno, 2020). In Rwanda, MINAGRI (2021) reports that a number of agricultural projects face implementation challenges including coordination problems and stakeholder disagreements, particularly in Rubavu District, where challenges such as land disputes, poor coordination, and conflicts between farmers and project leaders have affected sustainability.

Despite the importance of conflict management, there is limited empirical research in Rwanda examining how specific strategies: avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration affect measurable performance indicators in agricultural projects at the district level. This study therefore aimed to: (1) assess

the effect of avoidance strategy on project performance; (2) examine the effect of accommodation strategy; (3) evaluate the effect of compromise strategy; and (4) analyze the effect of collaboration strategy on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District, Rwanda, covering the period 2020–2024.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite national investments under PSTA 4 and Vision 2050, a number of agricultural projects in Rubavu District experience delays in implementation, misuse of resources, low beneficiary participation, and poor sustainability (MINAGRI, 2021). Conflicts arising from unequal distribution of benefits, leadership disputes, poor communication, and resource competition can reduce trust, slow down activities, increase costs, and negatively affect project outcomes. While policies emphasize participatory governance and transparency, there is limited empirical research examining how specific conflict management strategies affect the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District. Most existing studies focus on governance or general project challenges, not specifically on conflict management strategies and measurable performance outcomes. This lack of evidence makes it difficult for policymakers, project managers, and local authorities to design effective interventions. This study fills that gap.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

This study verified the following null hypotheses:

- H01: Avoidance strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.
- H02: Accommodation strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.
- H03: Compromise strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.
- H04: Collaboration strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Review

This study was grounded in two complementary theories. The Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI Model), developed by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann in 1974, explains how

individuals and groups respond to conflict in organizational and project settings through five modes—avoidance, accommodation, compromise, collaboration, and competition—based on two dimensions: assertiveness (concern for self) and cooperativeness (concern for others). Thomas and Kilmann (2008) argue that no single strategy is universally suitable; effectiveness depends on the nature of the conflict, urgency, stakeholder relationships, and project goals. In agricultural projects in Rubavu District, the TKI model provides a theoretical basis for analyzing how avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration influence timeliness, cost efficiency, product quality, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Edwin Locke (1968) and expanded by Locke and Latham (2002), holds that specific, clear, and challenging goals improve performance by motivating individuals to focus their efforts and persist in achieving results. In agricultural projects, goals such as increasing production, improving quality, reducing costs, and completing activities on schedule can be disrupted by unmanaged conflicts. The theory explains that effective conflict management—particularly through collaboration and compromise—helps maintain focus on shared objectives and keeps members committed to common goals, thereby improving performance in terms of productivity, efficiency, product quality, and stakeholder satisfaction.

2.2. Conceptual Review

2.2.1. Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict management strategies are structured approaches used to handle disagreements and tensions among project stakeholders. According to Rahim (2020), conflict management refers to minimizing negative effects while maximizing positive outcomes to improve group effectiveness. In agricultural projects, conflicts may arise from land use disagreements, unequal benefit sharing, leadership misunderstandings, and lack of transparency (Robbins & Judge, 2013). In this study, four strategies are examined: Avoidance withdrawing from or ignoring conflict, characterized by low concern for both self and others (Thomas & Kilmann, 2008). Accommodation: one party yields to others' demands to maintain harmony, with high concern for others but low concern for self. Compromise each party gives up part of its demands to reach a mutually acceptable solution, reflecting moderate concern for both self and others (Rahim, 2020). Collaboration parties work together openly through joint problem-solving and win-win solutions, with high concern for both self and others.

2.2.2. Performance of Agricultural Projects

Performance of agricultural projects refers to the extent to which project objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. According to Kerzner (2017), project performance is measured by how well resources are used to achieve defined goals while meeting stakeholder expectations. Baccarini (1999) distinguishes between project management success (time and cost control) and project outcome success (quality and stakeholder benefits). In this study, project performance is the dependent variable and is operationalized through four indicators: timeliness for productivity completing activities within the planned schedule; cost efficiency proper and economical use of financial and material resources; quality agricultural products outputs meeting required standards; and stakeholder satisfaction the degree to which project members, leaders, and beneficiaries are content with project processes and outcomes.

2.3. Empirical Review

Global and regional evidence confirms that conflict management strategies significantly influence project outcomes. Otieno (2018) found that avoidance in Kenyan and Ugandan projects reduced immediate tension but led to trust erosion over time, while Chen and Wang (2021) found that habitual avoidance was associated with weaker organizational performance. Mensah and Agyapong (2018) found accommodation improved short-term teamwork in Ghana but led to long-term dissatisfaction; Mugisha (2021) observed in Rwanda that cultural norms encourage accommodation, which maintained unity but prevented open discussion of financial problems. Kibet and Chepng'eno (2017) found compromise improved dispute resolution speed and operational efficiency in Kenyan agricultural projects, while Tuyisenge (2022) observed similar positive effects in Rwanda. Prakash and Sahu (2018) found that collaborative decision-making achieved sustained productivity growth in India, while Muriithi and Crawford (2020) reported that collaboration strengthened trust and sustainability in East African community-based agricultural projects.

In Rwanda, Ntwali and Habimana (2021) observed that internal disputes negatively affected productivity in agricultural initiatives but relied mainly on qualitative methods. Mukarugwiza and Uwizeyimana (2023) reported that conflicts contributed to mismanagement of funds and weak accountability without empirically analyzing specific strategy effects. Despite these contributions, no prior study has jointly and quantitatively examined how avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration individually and collectively influence measurable performance indicators in agricultural projects in Rubavu District—the gap this study fills.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates how four conflict management strategies (independent variables: avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration) influence the performance of agricultural projects (dependent variable), measured through timeliness for productivity, cost efficiency, quality agricultural products, and stakeholder satisfaction (Source: Researcher, 2026).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-method research design integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component employed descriptive and correlational designs: the descriptive design examined the current state of conflict management strategies without variable manipulation, while the correlational design determined the nature and strength of relationships between the four strategies and project performance. The qualitative component complemented quantitative findings by collecting in-depth information from key informants to explain how and why certain strategies influence project outcomes.

3.2. Target Population and Sample Size

The target population comprised approximately 24,525 individuals involved in agricultural projects in Rubavu District, including project managers, cooperative leaders, committee members, ordinary project members, and local government officials. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample of 378 respondents was selected. Of these, 333 (88%) fully completed and returned the questionnaire, exceeding the 70% threshold recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) as adequate for data analysis and generalization.

Table 3.1: Target Population and Sample Size

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Project leaders/managers	70	35	Purposive Sampling
Committee members	200	60	Stratified Random Sampling
Ordinary project members	580	140	Simple Random Sampling
Local government officials	100	39	Purposive Sampling
Farmers/beneficiaries from major	23,575	104	Stratified Random Sampling

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
projects			
Total	24,525	378	Mixed Methods

Source: Researcher, 2026

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Structured questionnaires and interview guides were the primary data collection instruments. Questionnaires consisted of closed-ended items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), organized around the four conflict management strategies and the performance indicators. Interview guides collected qualitative insights from project leaders and government officials. Secondary data were obtained from project reports, district agricultural offices, and policy documents. Questionnaires were administered face-to-face with assistance from trained research assistants, and interviews lasted 30–45 minutes.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Content validity was confirmed through expert review by academic supervisors and agricultural project practitioners. The Content Validity Index (CVI) yielded a value of 0.85, exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Polit & Beck, 2017). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha on pilot study data from 30 respondents. All constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold (Nunnally, 1978): avoidance ($\alpha = 0.83$), accommodation ($\alpha = 0.79$), compromise ($\alpha = 0.81$), collaboration ($\alpha = 0.86$), and performance ($\alpha = 0.84$), with an overall instrument alpha of 0.85.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were coded and entered into SPSS Version 28. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) summarized demographic characteristics and response patterns. Likert scale scores were interpreted as: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High. Pearson correlation analysis determined the direction and strength of relationships between each strategy and project performance. Simple regression analysis tested each hypothesis individually ($Y = \alpha + \beta X + \varepsilon$). Multiple regression assessed the combined effect ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$) where Y = project performance; X_1 = avoidance; X_2 = accommodation; X_3 =

compromise; X_4 = collaboration. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Ethical approval was obtained and all participants provided informed consent, with data anonymized throughout.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Performance of Agricultural Projects

To evaluate project performance, a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used, where SA (5) = Strongly Agree, A (4) = Agree, N (3) = Neutral, D (2) = Disagree, SD (1) = Strongly Disagree:

Table 4.1: Performance of Agricultural Projects

Statement	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	Mean	Std. Dev
Project activities are completed within planned timeframes	100 (30.0%)	120 (36.0%)	60 (18.0%)	28 (8.4%)	25 (7.5%)	4.03	0.90
The project meets expected agricultural production targets	105 (31.5%)	118 (35.4%)	63 (18.9%)	25 (7.5%)	22 (6.6%)	4.08	0.88
The quality of agricultural products has improved	110 (33.0%)	115 (34.5%)	60 (18.0%)	25 (7.5%)	23 (6.9%)	4.09	0.88
Operational costs are effectively managed	102 (30.6%)	120 (36.0%)	63 (18.9%)	28 (8.4%)	20 (6.0%)	4.07	0.89
Resources are utilized efficiently in project implementation	108 (32.4%)	118 (35.4%)	60 (18.0%)	25 (7.5%)	22 (6.6%)	4.10	0.88
Member satisfaction with project outcomes has increased	105 (31.5%)	120 (36.0%)	60 (18.0%)	25 (7.5%)	23 (6.9%)	4.08	0.88
The project generates sustainable income for members	102 (30.6%)	118 (35.4%)	63 (18.9%)	28 (8.4%)	22 (6.6%)	4.07	0.89
Project monitoring and evaluation systems are effective	100 (30.0%)	120 (36.0%)	65 (19.5%)	25 (7.5%)	23 (6.9%)	4.05	0.90
Stakeholder cooperation has improved project outcomes	108 (32.4%)	118 (35.4%)	60 (18.0%)	25 (7.5%)	22 (6.6%)	4.10	0.88
Overall, the agricultural project performs effectively & efficiently	110 (33.0%)	120 (36.0%)	60 (18.0%)	25 (7.5%)	18 (5.4%)	4.13	0.87
Composite Mean & Std. Dev.	–	–	–	–	–	4.08	0.89

Source: Researcher, 2026

The performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District was generally positive, with an overall composite mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.89), indicating that respondents moderately to strongly agreed that

projects achieved planned timeframes, met production targets, improved product quality, managed operational costs, utilized resources efficiently, and enhanced member satisfaction and income. The highest item mean (4.13) for overall project effectiveness reflects broad consensus that agricultural projects are successfully and efficiently managed, supporting the view that conflict management strategies positively mediate project outcomes.

4.2. Effect of Avoidance Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

The avoidance strategy descriptive data (composite mean = 4.01, SD = 0.90) indicated that respondents agreed that avoidance is commonly used and that while it reduces short-term tension, unresolved conflicts later affect trust (mean = 4.06) and contribute to delays in decision-making (mean = 3.98). Table 4.2 presents the regression results:

Table 4.2: Effect of Avoidance Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
Summary	.717a	.513	.512	.64982		
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA	Regression	147.526	1	147.526	349.365	.000b
	Residual	139.771	331	.422		
	Total	287.297	332			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Coefficients	(Constant)	1.082	.147	—	7.340	.000
	Avoidance Strategy	.705	.038	.717	18.691	.000

Source: Researcher, 2026. Dependent Variable: Performance of agricultural projects.

The model summary reveals an R^2 value of 0.513 with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that avoidance strategy accounts for 51.3% of the variation in agricultural project performance. The model is a good fit, $F(1, 331) = 349.365$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.705$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that a one-unit increase in avoidance strategy leads to an increase of 0.705 units in project performance. The regression equation is: $Y = 1.082 + 0.705X_1$.

4.2.1. Test for Hypothesis One

H01: Avoidance strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

Since the results showed that $\beta_1 \neq 0$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Thus, avoidance strategy has a significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

4.3. Effect of Accommodation Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Accommodation strategy descriptive data (composite mean = 4.02, SD = 0.89) indicated that accommodation promotes short-term unity (mean = 4.08) and reduces open confrontation (mean = 4.07), though respondents acknowledged risks of perceived unfairness (mean = 4.00) and reduced transparency. Table 4.3 presents the regression results:

Table 4.3: Effect of Accommodation Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
Summary	.433a	.188	.185	.83961		
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA	Regression	53.959	1	53.959	76.543	.000b
	Residual	233.338	331	.705		
	Total	287.297	332			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Coefficients	(Constant)	2.049	.201	—	10.217	.000
	Accommodation Strategy	.466	.053	.433	8.749	.000

Source: Researcher, 2026. Dependent Variable: Performance of agricultural projects.

The model summary reveals an R^2 value of 0.188 with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that accommodation strategy accounts for 18.8% of the variation in project performance. The model is a good fit, $F(1, 331) = 76.543$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.466$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that a one-unit increase in accommodation strategy improves project performance by 0.466 units. The regression equation is: $Y = 2.049 + 0.466X_2$.

4.3.1. Test for Hypothesis Two

H02: Accommodation strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

Since the results showed that $\beta_2 \neq 0$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Thus, accommodation strategy has a significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

4.4. Effect of Compromise Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Compromise strategy descriptive data (composite mean = 4.07, SD = 0.89) showed that respondents agreed compromise improves cooperation (mean = 4.10), supports timely implementation (mean = 4.09), and enhances overall performance (mean = 4.13). Only the risk of overuse leading to unsatisfactory solutions scored below 4.00 (mean = 3.97). Table 4.4 presents the regression results:

Table 4.4: Effect of Compromise Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Summary	.511a	.261	.259	.80084

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA	Regression	75.014	1	75.014	116.964	.000b
	Residual	212.283	331	.641		
	Total	287.297	332			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Coefficients	(Constant)	1.697	.195	—	8.685	.000
	Compromise Strategy	.546	.051	.511	10.815	.000

Source: Researcher, 2026. Dependent Variable: Performance of agricultural projects.

The model summary reveals an R^2 value of 0.261 with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that compromise strategy accounts for 26.1% of the variation in project performance. The model is a good fit, $F(1, 331) = 116.964$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.546$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that a one-unit increase in compromise improves project performance by 0.546 units. The regression equation is: $Y = 1.697 + 0.546X_3$.

4.4.1. Test for Hypothesis Three

H03: Compromise strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

Since the results showed that $\beta_3 \neq 0$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Thus, compromise strategy has a significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

4.5. Effect of Collaboration Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Collaboration strategy had the highest composite mean among all strategies (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.87). Respondents strongly agreed that open discussion of conflicts (mean = 4.16), enhanced communication (mean = 4.16), joint problem-solving to build trust (mean = 4.13), and positive overall project influence (mean = 4.16) all reflect collaboration's constructive role. Table 4.5 presents the regression results:

Table 4.5: Effect of Collaboration Strategy on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Summary	.554a	.307	.305	.77547

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA	Regression	88.247	1	88.247	146.745	.000b
	Residual	199.051	331	.601		
	Total	287.297	332			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Coefficients	(Constant)	1.585	.184	—	8.600	.000
	Collaboration Strategy	.559	.046	.554	12.114	.000

Source: Researcher, 2026. Dependent Variable: Performance of agricultural projects.

The model summary reveals an R^2 value of 0.307 with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that collaboration strategy accounts for 30.7% of the variation in project performance. The model is a good fit, $F(1, 331) = 146.745$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.559$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that a one-unit increase in collaboration improves project performance by 0.559 units. The regression equation is: $Y = 1.585 + 0.559X_4$.

4.5.1. Test for Hypothesis Four

H04: Collaboration strategy has no significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

Since the results showed that $\beta_4 \neq 0$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Thus, collaboration strategy has a significant effect on the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District.

4.6. Influence of Combined Conflict Management Strategies on Performance of Agricultural Projects

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effect of all four conflict management strategies on project performance. The regression output is presented in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6: Influence of Combined Conflict Management Strategies on Performance of Agricultural Projects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Summary	.765a	.585	.580	.60303

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA	Regression	168.023	4	42.006	115.51	.000b
	Residual	119.274	328	.364		
	Total	287.297	332			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Coefficients	(Constant)	.255	.181	—	1.410	.159
	Avoidance Strategy	.534	.042	.542	12.667	.000
	Accommodation Strategy	.043	.047	.040	.930	.353
	Compromise Strategy	.140	.049	.131	2.863	.004
	Collaboration Strategy	.203	.046	.201	4.369	.000

Source: Researcher, 2026. Dependent Variable: Performance of agricultural projects.

The model summary reveals an R^2 value of 0.585 with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the combined conflict management strategies explain 58.5% of the variation in agricultural project performance. The model is statistically significant, $F(4, 328) = 115.51$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Avoidance strategy has the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.542$, $p = 0.000$), followed by collaboration ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.000$) and compromise ($\beta = 0.131$, $p = 0.004$). Accommodation strategy was not statistically significant in the combined model ($\beta = 0.040$, $p = 0.353 > 0.05$), indicating that its independent contribution becomes negligible when the other three strategies are simultaneously present. The regression equation is: $Y = 0.255 + 0.534X_1 + 0.043X_2 + 0.140X_3 + 0.203X_4$.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn regarding conflict management strategies and the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District, Rwanda:

On avoidance strategy, the study concludes that it has a strong positive effect on project performance ($R^2 = 0.513$, $\beta = 0.705$, $p = 0.000$). Temporary withdrawal from conflict situations helps maintain short-term stability and continuity of activities. However, overreliance on avoidance may suppress important issues, reduce transparency, and negatively affect long-term trust among stakeholders. Avoidance is best applied

selectively during high-pressure periods such as peak farming seasons, followed by constructive resolution.

On accommodation strategy, the study concludes that it has a significant, albeit moderate, positive effect on project performance ($R^2 = 0.188$, $\beta = 0.466$, $p = 0.000$). By allowing members to prioritize relationships over personal interests, accommodation promotes unity and cohesion. However, its independent contribution becomes negligible when combined with other strategies, suggesting it should be applied in balance with more proactive approaches to avoid perceptions of unfairness and reduced accountability.

On compromise strategy, the study concludes that it significantly enhances project performance ($R^2 = 0.261$, $\beta = 0.546$, $p = 0.000$). When members seek middle-ground solutions, conflicts are resolved more quickly, cooperation improves, and project implementation becomes more efficient. Compromise is particularly valuable during critical agricultural seasons when delays can negatively affect productivity.

On collaboration strategy, the study concludes that it has a strong positive influence on project performance ($R^2 = 0.307$, $\beta = 0.559$, $p = 0.000$). Open communication, joint problem-solving, and shared responsibility strengthen teamwork, trust, innovation, and overall project outcomes. Collaboration represents the most constructive long-term approach to conflict management in agricultural projects.

Taken together, the four strategies jointly explain 58.5% of the variation in project performance ($R^2 = 0.585$, $F = 115.51$, $p = 0.000$). Avoidance emerged as the strongest individual predictor in the combined model ($\beta = 0.542$), followed by collaboration ($\beta = 0.201$) and compromise ($\beta = 0.131$). The study therefore confirms that effective and balanced application of conflict management strategies—with priority given to collaboration and compromise, strategic use of avoidance, and judicious use of accommodation—significantly improves the performance of agricultural projects in Rubavu District, Rwanda.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- i. Future studies should examine the role of leadership styles in shaping conflict management practices and their influence on agricultural project performance across different regions of Rwanda, to enrich understanding of contextual moderators.
- ii. Researchers may investigate the moderating effect of gender and socioeconomic status on the relationship between conflict management strategies and project performance outcomes, to inform more inclusive and equitable conflict resolution frameworks.

- iii. Comparative studies across districts or provinces could provide deeper insights into contextual differences in how avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and collaboration influence project outcomes, enabling broader generalization of findings beyond Rubavu District.

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