

Intentions Behind Social Capital Governance on the Performance of Community-Managed Water Projects

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ABSTRACT: Challenge of completing construction projects within the allocated budget, time and quality remain the biggest concern among project practitioners. Several approaches and tools have been developed over the past years to enhance the management of construction projects, yet projects dodge stakeholders' expectations. This paper has identified social capital governance (relational controls) that are useful for managing and delivery of community-managed water projects. Social capital concept is acknowledged as an organizing logic that boosts project organizations and communities' value. Thus, social capital is understood as people's personal and impersonal connections in a project organization, their quality as well as common representations. Social capital facilitates the coordination and partnership of project participants. Nevertheless, the newness of this concept in the context of project settings and distinctiveness of varied construction projects trigger questionings regarding social capital governance's representation and forms in project settings. A Quantitative approach was considered in addressing the emanating questions. A survey led to collection of data from 114 respondents, which enhanced the conceptualization of construction projects' social capital. The findings showed that collective responsibility, trust, member commitment, and shared norms/values all had favorable and significant effects on the performance of community-managed water projects in Mwanza City, Tanzania. The recommendations drawn from the findings include strengthening intimate associations and trust in community environment and improving project leaders' interactions with members of the community in informal links and promoting social trust for improved water projects outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Social Capital, Relational governance, informal control, water projects, performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A project entails the involvement and collaboration of multiple human operators in handling different activities to achieve specific objectives. The fact that project participants have high likelihood of interacting among themselves while handling the assigned activities influence a project to be understood as a chain of events shaped by the quality and traits of the involved parties' associations and interactions (Bongei et al., 2024). Thus, the relations' structure and collaboration rules shape the project activities. The observation of project organizations using this basis leads to use of network relationships in their characterization, arguing that influence network activities and their evolution as well as the participants' relationships (Wang & Sun, 2025).

The collective traits of individuals' social relations in a social circle, including the structure and quality of their relations often enhance actions among participants since they are connected by their conduct and source of information that shape the transfer and manifestation of resources (Tago, 2020; Wang & Sun, 2025). Nevertheless, the focus of organizational social capital focus mainly on permanent organizational settings despite its freeness in exploring organizational settings. According to Xue et al. (2025), the relevance of social capital can equally be felt in project organization.

Formal controls such as contracts, compliance audit, and M&E as well as written rules together with procedures, based on Adhan and Mutuku (2024) and Watenga and Kinoti (2024) as well as Galgallo and Ngugi (2023), inclined mainly on formulation of rules aimed at regulating the conduct of people. But they are essential managerial projects' governance mechanism (Tago, 2020). The existing evidence, however shows that it has numerous challenges relating to handling non-routine projects and dynamic momentary organization. Research also shows that some project tasks depict not only minimal observability, but also testability. Consequently, the level of ambiguity and uncertainty rises at the detriment of formal controls' significance necessitating harmonious governance strategy (Zhang et al., 2026; Almuhammad & Mohamad, 2021; Oyier & Tumuti, 2025; Lin et al., 2024;

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Sharari et al., 2022). Consequently, it necessitates complementary governance strategy. Based on the aforementioned scholars, social capital is an essential component of relational governance. Sözbilir and Kaya (2025) compared to Ramadan and Kangah (2022) insinuate that social governance components such as trust and shared norms as well as commitment and shared responsibility imply acceptability of vulnerability caused by uncontrollable behaviors.

Management of water projects including water points, wells and dams is a crucial element that influence the sustainable provision of water resources to the people in urban and rural settings in Tanzania (Sanka, 2024). Despite the Ministry of Water and Irrigation working together with international and local organizations in improving the grassroots situation, the supply of clean water is still poor within the country. Statistics show 40% of Tanzania's population have limited access to clean water despite the country having reliable sources of water in addition to substantive rainfall. Rural settings occupied by majority of the population is the most affected. According to Sanka (2024) and Kachenje (2025), the existing efforts that are evaluated using performance for realizing short-term objectives necessitate re-engineering to experience a 2000% output increase to achieve the water together with sanitation Sustainable Development Goals.

The participation of Tanzania's community in water supply projects is considerably low, which is evidenced by its low ownership level. A study by Ngusa (2022), which focused on factors that impact the sustainability of Busega's (in Tanzania) water projects established the region record low sustainability on its projects linked to inadequate participation of major players, limited potential, and inadequate spare parts for provision of service as well as maintenance. Sanka (2024) equally focused on water projects by researching on the effect of stakeholder involvement on performance using Bahati as the research setting. The gathered evidence showed that hygiene projects recorded improvement following civic engagement. However, the two studies failed to consider social capital governance as a potential influence in the management of water projects affecting the community in Mwanza within Tanzania. The identified gap is explored in the current study, which explored the application of social capital phenomenon in water construction projects that are not only more volatile, but also dynamic. The types of social capital along with their exhibition in different projects was explored using questionnaires formulated from previous literature that focused on construction projects. Accordingly, the current study centered on the implications of social capital governance, including informal control as well as relational control on the productivity/performance of water projects run by the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania. The hypothesis provided below was used as a guide:

H₀: Social capital governance has non-significant effect on the performance/output of community-managed water projects in Mwanza City, Tanzania.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

A social capital theory commonly used in project management backgrounds was adopted. According to this theory, social capital is an association anchored in members of a community or firm (Dobbin & Smith, 2021). The inter-member association in a community is driven by not only effective communication and coordination but also respect, trust, and mutuality besides contributing positively towards an organization (Dobbin & Smith, 2021). The identified organizational pros enhances sharing of knowledge and teamwork besides formation of new knowledge that foster organizational and social inventions in projects. According to Bizri et al. (2023), innovations are outcome of social learning linked with not only reciprocal participation but also the community members' collaboration. The innovations enhance survival as well as accomplishment of community projects. Firms that disregard future innovations often overlook small innovations. Bizri et al. (2023) concur with Wang and Sun (2025) by indicating social and organizational inventions or innovations arise from different community players' knowledge that convergence, whereas social capital is the origin of the identified convergence that promotes the community projects' output.

Review of literature stipulates the essence of appreciating the distinction of varied actors linked to variation based on identity, norms, and priorities linked to a project (Dobbin & Smith, 2021). Acknowledgement of different actors in water supply projects is essential since it boosts understanding of best way of exploiting opportunities created by personal backgrounds through formulation of strong social connections amidst structural anarchy.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Social Capital as a Lens for Clan Control

A three-dimensional view of social capital that Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) conceptualized was employed, as it was thought reliable in exploring project settings since it covers relational dimensions (Wang & Sun, 2025). The relational dimension entails personal associations established by people through historical interactions (Wang & Sun, 2025). It entails affective interpersonal links. Relational dimensions centers on the connections' quality or nature in relation to established trust, intimacy, and interest (Sharari et al., 2022) and the magnitude of reciprocity and emotion (Wang & Sun, 2025). Trust is one of the components of

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relational dimensions that organizational research gives considerable attention as it influences the completion of projects by different participants in a given setting (Ramadan & Kangah, 2022). Extreme interdependence necessitates exchange of information and reliance among project participants in accomplishing collective tasks. Nevertheless, none of the participants neither have complete control nor able to regulate other participants' behaviors. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the interests and goals of involved participants vary considerably (Sözbilir, & Kaya, 2025). Thus, individual control affects other participants' fate hence threatening the participants handling a project. The control and threat need influence rise of the participants' expectation and receptiveness to trust as well as trustworthy conduct. Based on the aforementioned circumstances, trust usefulness in a project is acknowledged since it boosts supportive activities in project settings that are perceived as risky or uncertain (Sözbilir, & Kaya, 2025).

Social capital, in the context of Arizkha et al.'s (2023) argument, is a resource entailing networks and people's relationships that foster cooperation as well as collective action. Contrary to other types of capital associated with machines, objects, or people, social capital centers on actors' relationships (Arizkha et al., 2023). Doan et al. (2023) use members of recreational clubs and religious entities in describing a robust social capital. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), members of the aforementioned associations demonstrate high reciprocity in promoting collective action. Social networks foster rich interactions that contribute to establishment of group members' strong cooperation. Findings by other scholars, including Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and Sözbilir and Kaya (2025) informed the current study, as evidenced by the definition of a clan as an entity with a strong social capital evidenced by shared beliefs and values as well as norms.

2.2.2 Social Capital Governance and Project Performance

The usefulness of social context and associations among actors involved in managing construction projects is widely acknowledged, as evidenced by multiple studies such as Huang et al. (2020) and Järvenpää and Eriksson (2022) as well as Wang et al. (2021) and Wang and Sun (2025). A close look at relational paradigm shows that relational issues are more detrimental compared to technical complexity since they are the key cause of breakdown in teams (Wang et al., 2021). Considering that construction projects entail a chain of firms and personnel that exercise economic independence despite interdepending technically (Wang et al., 2021) the relationships of involved personnel are critical since they influence their level of cooperation. Consequently, the social capital concept or phenomenon contributes positively to the current study that focuses on construction projects that are excellent examples of network-based organizations (Järvenpää & Eriksson, 2022). The peculiarity of construction projects such as water projects makes the low exploration of social capital, including its forms and implication on the performance of water projects a critical research question. The application of a concept developed by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) equally makes social capital a useful research area for the current study.

Construction project, based on Arizkha et al. (2023) view, is a network-based organization comprising multiple actors with distinct expertise in handling tasks or projects at different instances. According to Arizkha et al. (2023), the goodwill of the participants linked to their established relationship depicts the group's social capital also understood the social network of the project. A project organization is temporary in nature, but has elements that contribute to the establishment of a social capital. Among its traits, include interdependence that emanates from the interactions of the project participants' decisions and actions. The interdependence compels the involve parties to rely on each other in completing collective tasks. Arizkha et al. (2023) stress Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) argument by indicating mutual interdependence of the participants contributes as well as foster social capital through expounding their rate and level of interaction. Compared to Bizri et al. (2023) and Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), Abbasabady and Razeghi (2024) argue that the intensity of the participants' interaction equally grows due to the common space characterizing a project organization. A project organization provides multiple contexts along with occasions that promote interactions. Accordingly, the occasional interactions make a project organization an excellent platform for continuous socialization that boosts the establishment and retention of social networks and associations (Bizri et al., 2023). The formation of a project organization to address a specified goal within a specified time make their level and dynamism of social interaction higher compared to permanent organization, stressing the essence of social capital. In the context of project organization, the participants as well as the organization have distinct dynamism as well as operational logic. Apart from being mainly context-specific and based on process and action (Ekiru et al., 2020), project works demonstrate dynamism linked to the parties' interactions and social interaction patterns (Ho, 2025). The defined circumstances imply that an endangered social capital impede not only the group performance, but also the project performance.

A project organization has also parties with distinct specialties that are affected by autonomy requirements and embedment with the parent and the setting of the project organization. The diverseness compels the involved parties to constantly acclimatize to new situations arising from the flux and fluidity of the circumstances within the organization (Arias, 2021). The absence of a central authority in a network type organizations (Arias, 2021) make coalitions established by project participants to rely on varied social

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mechanisms, including trust and reciprocity in functioning effectively (Sözbilir & Kaya, 2025). Nevertheless, participants should demonstrate commitment rather than misusing the trust practiced by the group handling a project.

Social boundaries need separation in a project organization. Arizkha et al. (2023) as well as Aviyanti et al. (2024) argue that social boundaries in a project organization need demarcation from nonmembers despite being permeable to make the organization closed. The closure facilitates the formulation of the participants' norms, identity, and trust. Sharari et al. (2022) hold view similar to Zhang et al.'s (2026) that lack of closure contributes to the emergence of cognitive as well as relational form of social capital. Conclusively, invocation and utilization of the social capital phenomenon is practical to community project. The participants' social capital is essential since project organizational activities are formulated socially (Mwakalila & Muneeni, 2025). According to Ho (2025), the interaction among participants facilitates negotiations, refining, and realization of common comprehension besides establishment of sense and learning. A project environment characterized by extreme volatility and dynamism due to instability of consequential norms shaping common actions of the participants linked to flux of changes at a specific time necessitate the networking of participants with others to comprehend the organizational activities (Mwaungulu & Stan, 2025; Arizkha et al., 2023). Networking allows the transfer of knowledge and ideas useful in boosting the project performance.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research survey. Descriptive survey entails determination of a phenomenon's occurrence as well as variables' association (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The adopted approach was thought reliable in completing the current study that focused on gathering comprehensive information using descriptions that enhance identification of variables. About 281 individuals were identified, including Village executive officers (VEO) and Ward Executive officers (WEO) as well as project committee members together with leaders of Community Owned Water Supply Organizations (COWSOs) in Mwanza City, Tanzania as potential respondents. The population was narrowed down to 163 by determining the 95% confidence level at the target population of 281 and 0.05 error based on Cochran's sample size formula for finite population (Gutta, et al., 2024).

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot N \cdot \sigma_p^2}{(N - 1)e^2 + z^2 \sigma_p^2}$$

Where; n = Sample size, N = Population size (281), e = Acceptable error (0.05), σ_p = The standard deviation of the population and given as 0.5 of unknown, Z = Standard variate at a confidence level given as 1.96 at 95% confidence level.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability Analysis

Application of the Cronbach's alpha helped measure the collected data's reliability. According to Gutta et al. (2024), Cronbach's alpha is a reliability's coefficient that provides unbiased estimation of data generalizability. An alpha coefficient of 0.70 or more suggests the collected data is not only reliable but also have considerably high internal consistency, which can be generalized to the responses shared by the research participants in a specified population (Gutta, et al., 2024).

Table 4. 1: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability	Decision
Collective responsibility	.731	Reliable	Accepted
Trust	.788	Reliable	Accepted
Commitment	.813	Reliable	Accepted
Shared Norms/Values	.706	Reliable	Accepted

Table 4.1 depicts highest reliability (0.813) of commitment, higher reliability of trust (0.788), and reliability of collective responsibility (0.731). Shared norms/values with (0.706) score was the least reliable. Nevertheless, the table infers all variables were not only reliable but also acceptable.

4.2 Response Rate

One-hundred and fourteen respondents returned their questionnaires out of the sampled 163, suggesting a 70.37% response rate. Based on Creswell and Creswell's (2022) and Gutta, et al.'s (2024) argument a 60 percent and above response from the used sample is recommendable.

Table 4. 2: Response Rate

Total Questionnaires Administered	Filled-in questionnaires	Response Rate.
163	114	70.37%

4.3 Demographic Information

The demographic information reveals data related to respondent's gender, period in which they have been working in community projects in Mwanza, and the level of education.

4.3.1 Gender

Review of the respondents' gender was thought necessary in determining whether the selection of respondents was skewed.

Table 4. 3: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	68	59.6
Female	46	40.4
Total	114	100

Table 4.3 shows that the representation of males and females was 59.6% and 40.4% respectively. The difference in representation was considerably small, as the selection of respondents was equal to all management employees regardless of their gender.

4.3.2 Working Duration in Community Water Projects

The working duration of the respondents in community water projects in Mwanza City was evaluated to determine reliability of their responses in making informed conclusions regarding the researched subject.

Table 4. 4: Period of Working in Community Water Projects

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3 years	18	15.8
3 to 9 years	47	41.2
9 to 12 years	36	31.6
Above 12 years	13	11.4
Total	114	100

Table 4.4 depicts 41.2%, 31.6%, 15.8 %, and 11.3% of the respondents had 3-9 years, 9-12 years, less than 3 years, and over 12 years working experience with the community water projects in Mwanza City. Conclusively, the selected sample had adequate experience to comprehend the researched issue.

4.3.3 Education Level

Education level of respondents was also considered a critical aspect in the collection of appropriate information relating to the performance of water projects.

Table 4. 5: Highest Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent
Standard Seven (7)	8	7
Certificate	29	25.5
Diploma	27	23.6
Degree	50	43.9
Total	114	100

Table 4.5 shows 43.9%, 25.5%, 23.6%, and 7% had bachelor's degree, certificate, diploma, and standard seven education level respectively. Based on information provided in table 4.5, majority of the respondents had high likelihood of comprehending the researched subject.

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4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis facilitated the testing of the impact of collective responsibility and trust as well as commitment and common norms/values regarding the performance or output of water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania.

Table 4. 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.863	0.745	0.736	1.655

Table 4.6 summarizes the outcome of regression analysis. R square referred equally as coefficient of determination depicts the variation of water projects' performance in Mwanza City with collective responsibility and trust as well as commitment and common norms/values. Based on the Adjusted R square value, 73.6% variance in performance or output of water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City is elaborated by the four aspects, including collective responsibility and trust as well as commitment and common norms/values.

Table 4.7: ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	896.68	4	224.170	79.638	0.000
	Residual	306.82	110	2.815		
	Total	1203.5	114			

The ANOVA results following the overall regression is summarized by Table 4.7. Based on this table, the regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 110) = 79.638$, $p < 0.001$. It provided a Regression Sum of Squares of 896.68 and a Residual Sum of Squares of 306.82, suggesting adequate dependent variable's variation is illustrated by the independent variables analyzed in the model. Considering ($p = 0.000$) is a less significance value compared to the predetermined significance level of 0.05, the current study's null hypothesis implying the regression model is statistically non-significant is rejected. Consequently, a joint analysis of the four independent variables (collective responsibility and trust as well as commitment and common norms/values) explain comprehensively the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 4.8: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.924	0.213		4.338	0.000
Collective responsibility	0.833	0.202	0.616	4.124	0.000
Trust	0.632	0.214	0.545	2.953	0.005
Commitment	0.717	0.203	0.443	3.532	0.001
Shared Norms/Values	0.563	0.246	0.501	2.289	0.020

The equation formulated using table 4.16 is $Y = 0.924 + 0.833X_1 + 0.632X_2 + 0.717X_3 + 0.563X_4$

The beta coefficient enhances determination of independent variables with highest effect on the dependent variable. Considering all other factors are constant, the Beta coefficient of four variable on performance of community-managed water projects in Mwanza City using the regression equation is 0.924. based on the findings, when all independent variables are zero, an increase of collective responsibility by a unit increases the community water projects' performance by 0.833. The findings showed the collective responsibility was statically significant as $0.00 < 0.05$. The outcome of Sanka's (2024) research stress the gathered results, as it established that the presence of a formal community organization operating as a communal system influences the entire sustainability of a water project. Sanka's findings stressed that the communities with inadequate cooperation and accountability recorded significantly low sustainability. Based on the gathered evidence, capitalist communities recorded lower performance in the management of water projects compared to communities exercising shared accountability.

The findings equally suggest an increase of Trust by just a unit by community members such as project leaders influences the performances of community water projects to rise by 0.632. Trust was found significant since $0.005 < 0.05$ (alpha). Arizkha et al. (2023) as well as Lin et al. (2024) emphasize the reported findings by informing that collective participation of members of the

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community in addition to community trust fostered growth in Bejjong Tourism Village' tourism sector besides improving the construction enterprises output. However, Sözbilir and Kaya's (2025) findings contradict the outcome of the current project as they established trust and reciprocity, which are key aspects of social capital had non-significant influence on education sector's innovative behavior. Contrary to Sözbilir and Kaya's (2025) study that inclined on education sector, the current study focused on communities sharing one setting that was applicable to the research focus "the community-managed water projects."

Based on the outcome of the conducted analysis, a unit rise in the community members' commitment a 0.717 rise in the performances water projects managed by the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania. A score of $0.001 < 0.005$, suggesting commitment was statically significant. Arias (2021) and Galgallo and Ngugi (2023) as well as Nugroho et al. (2025) support the reported findings by stressing the usefulness of organizations guaranteeing their employees as well as the community access varied and numerous public services such as equal opportunities to employment and remuneration in addition to improved work environment and community services such as water supply. Aris (2021) further the gathered evidence by indicating that the commitment of employees to a firm's goals influence creation of opportunities or prevention of risks to a firm. Although Lin et al. (2024) associated trust, communication, and cooperation with significant influence on the international project performance particularly the construction enterprises, they linked commitment with non-significant effect on performance. Considering Lin's study researched mainly international projects, constituting teams from distinct communities and backgrounds as well as practicing varied cultures, its conclusion can apply slightly to the current study.

The collected evidence also showed a unit rise in the common norms and values scores cause a 0.563 upsurge in in the performance water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania. The score for this variable was $0.020 < 0.05$, implying its statistical significance. Ramadan and Kangah (2022) compared to Makulbayeva and Sharipova (2024) support the collected findings, as they established that project managers who incorporated team values in the existing project management principles while stressing on practice of cooperation, respectful conducts, reciprocity, and teamwork observed growth in their projects' performance. Generally, the gathered evidence backs the alternative hypothesis that "Social capital governance has a significant relationship with the performance of water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania. Based on the gathered evidence, the community's collective responsibility recorded highest influence on the water projects' performance, trust levels followed, then common norms/values which recorded least influence on the community-managed water projects' performance in Mwanza City, Tanzania.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Multiple recommendations emanated from the gathered evidence to improve the sustainability as well as the performance of Tanzania's community-managed water projects innovations. First, the gender disparity should be minimized by increasing the participation of women duration the establishment and registration of water management committees such COWSOs. Such action will increase the involvement of at least all community members in making critical decisions relating to water projects.

Second, it is imperative for strict guidelines to be created at the lowest level, including village or street levels, to enhance governance of actions taken by water committee management team concerning water projects. Consequently, the level of transparency in financial management as well as leadership will improve at the advantage of effective management of water projects. It is also imperative for a proposal on development of transparent, flexible, adaptive, and comprehensive community accountabilities should be considered to improve the handling of potential challenges, change of project needs, and the conduct of members of the community. Approaches that increase the flexibility of the community members' involvement in water projects' management should also be considered. Generally, the findings will be valuable in bridging the literature gap created by inclination on the contributions of project leadership at the disadvantage of social capital aspects.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The implication of social capital governance on performance or output of water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City, Tanzania was explored using a Quantitative method approach. The gathered evidence linked collective responsibility and trust levels as well as community commitment and common norms and values with significant effect on the overall outcome of water projects under the management of the community in Mwanza City. Shared accountability, obligation, and communication stress the implication of relational dimension on the project's success. Despite this dimension facilitating interactions, there are other relational dimension aspects that determine a normative structure that is essential in producing shared set of conventions, teamwork, rules and procedures that impact community projects. The gathered evidence showed that relational controls enrich members with psychological security through trust and commitment as well as reciprocity values. Based on this perspective, social capital is a critical relational governance that shape the operation of projects compared to permanent organization. Accordingly, project organizers as well as community leaders should encourage the socialization among all parties

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in water projects. They can achieve this by supporting the establishment network structures that promote continuous consideration of the participants' responsibilities and views.

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