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Project Communication, Individual Commitment, Social Networks, and Perceived Project Performance

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This research examines the role of project communication, individual commitment, and social networks in explaining perceived project performance. Despite the increased involvement of commercial banks in citizenship projects in Uganda, anecdotal evidence reveals that over 70% of citizenship projects fall short of the expected quality, fail to boost bank awareness, are cost overrun, and are completed behind schedule. Based on data from 121 citizenship projects conducted by 16 commercial banks in Uganda, findings revealed that project communication, individual commitment, and social networks are significant predictors of perceived project performance. This study has managerial implications, which are presented in this article.

Key words: commitment, communication, project performance, social networks

INTRODUCTION

Projects are now found in most organizations today, and any study that seeks to validate the factors that influence project performance is of great importance to both researchers and practitioners. In Uganda, commercial banks have focused on new competitive strategies such as increased investment in citizenship projects as a means of sustaining performance (Hopkins, 2007; McDonald & Rundle-Thiele, 2008). According to Drucker (1993), citizenship projects are those projects aimed at active commitment to making a difference in one's community, one's society, and one's country. Many commercial banks

are becoming more involved in activities such as improving education and public health (Barclay's sustainability review report, 2007) because superior firm performance is linked with the success of citizenship projects (Hopkins, 2007; Scott, 2007). Despite the increased involvement of commercial banks in citizenship projects in Uganda, anecdotal evidence reveals that over 70% of citizenship projects fall short of the expected quality, fail to boost bank awareness, are cost overrun, and are completed behind schedule (Barclays Bank Uganda, 2007; Stanbic Bank Uganda, 2009). This could be attributed to ineffective project communication (Ramsing, 2009; Ruuska, 1996), inadequate social networks (Andrews, 2007; Downes, 2005; Granovetter, 1973), and lack of individual commitment to such projects (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The successful management of citizenship projects from idea generation to handover presents a win-win situation for the bank and society (Scott, 2007). However, local companies have failed to implement citizenship projects to the satisfaction of society (Ofori & Hinson, 2007). According

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to Baker (2007), more than 95% of project failures could be attributed to ineffective project communication. Scott (2007) alludes to the fact that perceived failure of citizenship projects causes negative publicity. For example, when Standard Chartered Bank embarked on a project, under their “Nets for Life” program, amid insufficient sensitization to distribute insecticide-treated nets in Makindye-Kampala where malaria accounts for most deaths, the project was received with negative publicity as residents felt the bank intended to kill them. They posed questions like, “If these things can kill mosquitoes, why not us?” (Zachary, 2005). Clarity of project information fosters commitment and trustworthy relationships among the targeted societies (Scott, 2007).

According to Downes (2005), relationships among societies are referred to as social networks. These networks enhance performance by facilitating social capital exchanges (Hogg & Adamic, 2004). As such, the neglect of social norms adversely affects performance (Bushuyu, 2006). The insecticide-treated nets project in Makindye, for example, created perceived segregation as the project scope covered only expectant mothers in disregard of the fact that in some African societies, men do not sleep with expectant mothers. Thus perceived segregation perhaps reduced the would-be collective-positive societal support and commitment to the project (Bushuyu, 2006). This is consistent with Sanchez and Brock (1996), who argue that a decline in one’s commitment may result from perceived discrimination. Presently, some top-level managers are still less committed to citizenship activities by suggesting that citizenship projects detract them from business-related responsibilities (Hopkins, 2007). This is manifested in delays to pass decisions that pertain to implementation of citizenship projects. Consequently, management makes late and less than required financial releases. The challenge widens as other project team members are influenced to act similarly. Although Stanbic Bank Uganda’s commitment to citizenship projects is well incorporated in its vision (Stanbic Bank Uganda, 2009), anecdotal evidence surprisingly shows that over 60% of its employees are not aware of such undertakings and by implication are not committed to them. There is a need to ensure that citizenship projects that commercial banks fund meet their expectations.

While most previous studies have attempted to examine the predictors of project performance using models from a developed world context (Chavart, 2003; Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001; Sheffield & Lemétayer, 2010; Shenhar, Tishler, Dvir, Lipovetsky, & Lechler, 2002; Van Donk & Molloy, 2008), little research has been done in Uganda to validate these findings. Most of the research is speculative and anecdotal. The purposes of this research were to examine the relationship among (a) project communication and individual commitment, (b) individual commitment and perceived project performance, (c)

project communication and social networks, and (d) social networks and perceived project performance in Uganda and to draw implications for least developed countries. The rest of this article reviews the literature to generate a hypothesis and conceptual framework, followed by research methodology, findings, implications, limitations, and areas for future research in the conclusion.

CONCEPTS AND HYPOTHESES

Project Communication and Individual Commitment

Project communication refers to information exchanges intended to create understanding among project stakeholders (Ruuska, 1996). Stakeholders are any group of individuals who can affect or are affected by the project (Freeman, 1994) including the local communities, regulatory agencies, customers, project team, project sponsor, etc. Effective project communication creates a feeling of responsibility and attachment between a stakeholder and the project tasks that makes him/her indebted to the project, thereby creating an atmosphere for individual team members to act without much control and coercion. Under such circumstances, what drives a person to work is the emotional attachment to the project as fostered through communication. This is consistent with the findings of Ntayi, Rooks, Eyaa, and Qian (2010) that showed that workers with a positive attitude about the task carry out certain role behaviors well beyond the basic minimum levels required of them. They, for example, may not take extra breaks and they tend to obey the project rules and regulations even without supervisions; they attend meetings that are not mandatory but are considered important. They also keep abreast of changes within the project and elsewhere that affect or are affected by the project and responsibly discuss them with those concerned. Consistent with Lievens and Moenaert (2000), project communication was conceptualized as either extra-project communication (communication with the external project environment) and intra-project communication (communication flows within the project).

Individual commitment is conceptualized as the willingness by an individual to devote energy and loyalty to a project as expressed in three forms: affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The “net sum” of a person’s commitment to a project reflects each of these separable psychological states (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment is an individual’s emotional attachment with (i.e., identification with and involvement in) the project. Continuance commitment refers to the individual’s recognition of the benefits of continued association with the project compared to the perceived cost of leaving the project. Normative commitment

refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain in the project. All three forms of commitment affect the individual's willingness to remain with a project and his or her work-related behavior. Consistent with Oliver's (1980) cognitive and affective theory, when a manager or team member with a high need for self-esteem volunteers to work on a project and communicates his or her intentions to associate with the project, he or she becomes emotionally attached to ensuring the project succeeds. This is because the team member derives satisfaction from the success of philanthropic engagements. As long as the project delivers as expected by its stakeholders, they will remain committed to the project's values; otherwise, stakeholders may become less committed and dissociate themselves from the project (Conway & Briner, 2002; Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003). According to Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990), individuals who perceive that they are cared for not only have higher levels of commitment but also are more conscious about their responsibilities, have greater involvement in the organization, and are more innovative.

Studies have revealed that project communication and commitment are critical for project success (Chavart, 2003; Chow & Cao, 2008; Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Ntayi et al., 2011; Pinto & Slevin, 1988; Sheffield & Lemétayer, 2010; Shenhar, Tishler, Dvir, Lipovetsky, & Lechler, 2002; Van Donk & Molloy, 2008). In the context of citizenship projects in Africa, Diallo and Thuillier (2004) established that communication and trust were among the motivators that created commitment and success of international development projects based on the perceptions of African project coordinators. Muriithi and Crawford (2003) explicated the applicability and relevance of project management approaches, tools, and techniques in Africa. Apart from a few empirical studies, other studies have been mainly conceptual (Moses & Vest, 2010; Steyn & Nunes, 2007). Despite the increased involvement of commercial banks in citizenship projects in Uganda to improve the community welfare, there seems to be no significant contribution to the society and yet no empirical studies have been carried out to evaluate their contribution. A study in Uganda is urgently needed because of its historical background associated with political instability, high poverty levels, income disparities, high infant mortality rates, and diseases such as malaria, among others. This would probably help to understand the role of project communication, individual commitment, and project success in improving the welfare and draw implications. From this debate, we therefore hypothesize:

H1: There is a positive relationship between project communication and individual commitment to the project.

Individual Commitment and Perceived Project Performance

A project is usually defined as "a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result" (Project Management Institute, 2008, p. 5). Projects undergo a series of stages that include initiation, planning, controlling, implementation, and closing processes (Project Management Institute, 2008). Successful project performance is measured as the ability to complete the project according to desired specifications, within the specified budget, scope, and time schedule while keeping the customer and other stakeholders happy (Cella, Dymond, Cooper, & Turnbull, 2007). Project success has been measured differently in the literature (Ika, 2009; Jugdvev & Muller, 2005). Pinto and Slevin (1988) acknowledged three aspects of project performance as the implementation process, the perceived value of the project, and client satisfaction with the delivered project outcome. Shenhar et al. (1997) suggest two additional project performance measures: business success and preparing for the future. However, empirical results by Lipovetsky, Tishler, Dvir, and Shenhar (1997) indicate that the importance of the latter measurement is all but negligible. Perceived project performance refers to what the project stakeholders like the project sponsor and client make out of the project performance. Usually, various directly and indirectly affected parties perceive the operations of the project differently due to the diversity of interests. What the recipient sees as a failure may be viewed as a success by the implementer of the project. Despite research in project management, there is no agreement on project performance. Usually, some stakeholders perceive successful projects as failures due to inadequate awareness; if project stakeholders know nothing of what the project is about, they will get the perception that the project is not worthwhile.

Committed project members more often do not have intentions to quit (Addae, Parboteeah, & Davis, 2006), which saves the project the costs of recruiting and orienting a new member in terms of both time and money. Also, costs of supervision are mitigated if the project members are committed to their project tasks. It follows that where project stakeholders are joyful about the project's success, the investing bank's public image will blossom, as in the case of citizenship projects run by commercial banks. Despite the abundance of research that has examined commitment and performance (Riketta, 2002), very few studies (e.g., Ntayi et al., 2010) have examined this phenomenon in a Ugandan context. Even then, they did not focus on the performance of citizenship projects, which are of late gathering more strategic attention as drivers of organizational competitiveness (McDonald & Rundle-Thiele,

2008). It is imperative, therefore, that the understanding of individual commitment as an antecedent of performance is enriched through extending the frontiers of research. Consistent with this argument, we theorize that

H2: There is a positive relationship between individual commitment to the project and perceived project performance.

Project Communication and Social Networks

Although social networks have been interpreted in a variety of lexis, most scholars allude to the fact that social networks are linkages (social ties) between entities. Downes (2005, p. 411), for example, refers to social networks as a collection of individuals linked together by a set of relations. Social networks could also be defined as a “web” where direct or indirect social relationships surround the individuals. Entities in a network are called “nodes” and the connections between them are called “ties” (Downes, 2005). According to Fowler, Dawes, and Christakis (2009), social networks can be fundamentally discussed in terms of degree and transitivity. Social network degree is the number of social ties the project has. Network degree is at times referred to as network size. On the other hand, network transitivity refers to the likelihood that two of a person’s contacts are connected to each other. It transforms into the level of trust members give themselves. The establishment, development, defense, and maintenance of network positions are achieved by developing multiple relationships in the focal net—, i.e., in the relevant network in which the firm is active by relating externally and adapting internally.

According to Ruuska (1996), project communication acts as a connecting factor that links the various stakeholders of the project together and also the project to its environment, let alone uniting its activities at different levels of development. Ntayi et al. (2010) allude to the strength of the linkage (relationship) growing through a history of interactions in which members of a network develop friendship and trust. This statement points to the fact that stronger relations in a network could be fostered through effective project communication over time. Herkt (2007) affirms that the project manager’s major responsibility is to build supportive social networks (collaborative relationships) among a diverse group of stakeholders. Burt (2001) argues that no social network can be fully depended upon because of the diversity in egocentricity among nodes. He avers that “the fact that an individual can live up to expectations of several others in different places and at different times makes it possible to preserve an inner core, to withhold inner attitudes while conforming to various expectations.” Maintaining effective communication with the

project team over time raises the quantity of social ties and the clustering coefficient both directly and indirectly. This is consistent with Zhong and Low’s (2009) findings that changes driven by the project management are usually unlikely to produce desired effects without coordination and support from a variety of personnel. Project managers, however, are usually preoccupied with addressing the technical issues and fail on soft issues like proper functioning of informal communication. The value of oral communication must be taken into consideration as it affects the interaction patterns among project members. In the current times of the Internet, e-mail, and instant messaging, the quality of the actual communication can determine the longevity of the group and help predict the likelihood of the group’s survival. Face-to-face communication is needed, especially in the early stages, to establish understanding and trust among members. We therefore hypothesize that

H3: There is a positive relationship between project communication and social networks.

Social Networks and Perceived Project Performance

Social networking is perceived as a useful means of achieving intended social targets (Neergard, Shaw, & Carter, 2005) like providing social support. Social support is pertinent during implementation given that every project success is characterized by the need to beat deadlines, which usually puts pressure on the project team. Social networks provide the shared maintenance (Hogg & Adamic, 2004) necessary to calm high stress levels and enable achievement of not only timely but also quality outputs. Social networks act as a vehicle for quickly and easily getting the project message to the intended audience, thereby enhancing project awareness (Hogg & Adamic, 2004) and the organization’s public image at large. According to Burt (2001), social networks provide access to timely information and referrals to others in the network. He adds that timely access to information among others creates a deeper understanding of community needs at the initiation stage of any project development. This supports the view that ample information at initiation mitigates the possibility of losing out on quality in the later stages as a result of inadequate project planning. Particularly, collaborations create perceived fairness in exchanges, thereby reducing transaction cost (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003) in the form of less detailed contracts and less restrictive clauses with stakeholders like the government. Transactions involve the cost of discovering who it is that one wishes to deal with, informing people that one wishes to deal and on what terms, and conducting negotiations among others,

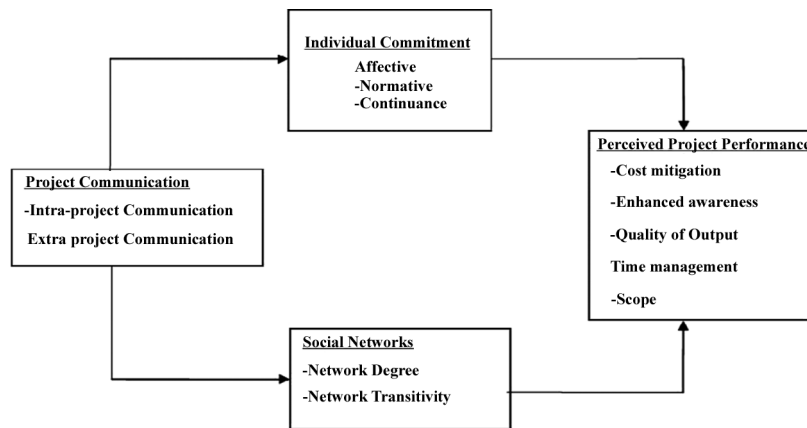


FIGURE 1 Conceptual Framework.

which is inexpensively and quickly achieved through social networks. We hypothesize that

H4: There is a positive relationship between social networks and perceived project performance.

Description of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows that both intra-project communication and extra-project communication influence the commitment of individual stakeholders in executing citizenship activities. Individual commitment of stakeholders influences the perceived performance of citizenship projects in terms of costs, awareness, and time and cost management. Also, project communication influences the degree and transitivity of social networks, which then influence perceived performance of the project.

METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy and Design

This study was conducted from the positivistic philosophical approach based on ontological assumption that reality is external and objective (Collis & Hussey, 2003). This research paradigm is appropriate here because the research aims to describe a scientific process to establish the relationships between variables to obtain statistically significant findings that can be generalized to a population under study without bias. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design because the study was meant to test rather than generate theory; it also adopted a quantitative approach, which focused on describing and drawing inferences from the findings on the relationships between project communication, individual commitment, social networks, and perceived project

performance. Zero-order correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed to investigate the relationships between the variables and the extent to which the independent variables explained perceived performance of citizenship projects.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The field study population comprised all 121 citizenship projects conducted by the 16 commercial banks in Uganda (Bank of Uganda, 2009). The unit of analysis consisted of the citizenship projects. Simple random sampling method was used where the 121 citizenship projects were written down on small pieces of paper and mixed in a box; then 92 of them were randomly picked in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This method of sampling gave an equal chance to each project in the sampling frame that was chosen. The response rate was 68% of the target. The unit of inquiry comprised the corporate affairs managers (citizenship project champions) and those employees who were or had ever taken part in the sampled projects. From each selected bank, three project managers, two of whom were from any two conveniently selected branches of the bank and one was from the bank’s head office, were sampled. Five employees from each of the bank branches were purposively targeted (Patton, 1990), which added up to a total of 208 target respondents. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were that where a person was picked and found not to have participated in the selected projects, he or she was discarded from the data and replaced with the next convenient person. The cross-sectional analysis was used because it provides a snapshot of the population at one point in time, assessing conditions by gathering information on people’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices that can be used as bases for policy decisions.

The responses were provided from 172 usable questionnaires representing an 82% response rate; the

responses were analyzed using SPSS version 15.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). The results showed that 54% of respondents had been involved in the execution of citizenship projects for a period of 3 to 6 years; 6.4% and 1.7% had spent 7 to 10 and more than 10 years, respectively, in the execution of citizenship projects. The findings further indicated that most of these projects have existed for about 3 to 6 years (48.8%), less than 3 years (43.6%), or more than 10 years (2.9%). The majority of respondents were females (51.7%), which could imply that more females take up citizenship activities than their male counterparts. A majority of these respondents were either married (52%) or single (46%), with those in the age bracket of 20 to 30 years representing 73.3%. Of the respondents, 72.7% had attained at least a bachelor's degree, and 4% and 15% had master's and professional qualifications, respectively. Regarding the positions held in the execution of citizenship projects by individual respondents, a majority (78.5%) of them revealed that they were a team member, while 10.5% were project managers and 4.1% were project beneficiaries. The project types included the categories of health (31.7%), education (19%), environment (11.1%), economic (25.4%), and rehabilitation (12.7%).

Data Collection

The self-administered questionnaire was first piloted on business management professors from Makerere University, Kampala, a major research university in Uganda. Among these, four professors had worked on citizenship projects in Africa for a remarkable time of longer than four years and had widespread experience with this topic. The scales were also pilot-tested using 45 citizenship projects and yielded a 100% response rate. Based on these responses and comments, item scales that were unclear and ambiguous were either improved or deleted. Following the guidelines set forth by Dillman (1991), questions were brief and to the point, addressing only a single issue at a time and avoiding phrases that could elicit a socially acceptable response. Each construct was measured by at least five questions that were relevant in terms of prior research or established theory. A well-designed cover letter was included that explained the purpose and intended use of survey data and promised anonymity of both respondent and company in the reporting. Survey questions captured the perceptions of corporate affairs managers about citizenship projects for which they are expected to be the most knowledgeable. Perceptual measures are frequently used in project management research since they can parallel objective data in accuracy, and cogent arguments have been advanced for using the managers as the key informant for questions regarding the performance of projects within the organization. When using single informants,

it is desirable to select the most experienced and knowledgeable person. By virtue of their position, managers are exposed to the views of other senior executives as well as those of peers and subordinates. To reduce the possibility of single-informant bias that might result from exaggeration and self-promotion and to encourage participation, the respondents were advised that results would be completely anonymous.

Measures and Operationalization

The measurement item scales used in the self-administered questionnaire were derived from literature review and tested items were used where possible; procedural control had to be taken during the design of any new measures to avoid common methods variance. Following the guidelines set forth by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003), the independent and dependent variables were examined and what they had in common was eliminated. The reliability of the scales was ascertained by performing the Cronbach's α coefficient test and all the coefficients were above .7 and hence deemed adequate (Nunnally, 1967). Content validity checks were also performed on the constructs to ensure that the items were meaningful to the sample and captured the issues that were being measured and yielded item content validity index (CVI) above .7. The professors were requested to rate each scale item in terms of its congruence to the underlying construct. For each item, the item CVI was computed as the number of professors giving a rating divided by the total number of professors. This demonstrated an index of interrater agreement that expressed the proportion of agreement. Table 1 shows Cronbach's α and CVI values.

A factor analysis was conducted using the principal components analysis (PCA) approach with varimax rotation to confirm the suitability of the construct indicators. Varimax rotation generally yields more stable results and is easier to interpret. PCA approach was chosen because it provides a linear summarization of the data into simpler components and produces exact scores rather than estimates. PCA is also the simplest of the true eigenvector-based multivariate analyses that often reveals the internal structure of the data in a way that best explains the variance in the data by pro-

TABLE 1
Cronbach's α Values and CVI Values

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Anchor</i>	<i>Cronbach's α</i>	<i>CVI</i>
Project communication	5 Point	.832	.800
Individual commitment	5 Point	.867	.889
Social networks	5 Point	.794	.842
Perceived project performance	5 Point	.868	.714

TABLE 2
Factor Analysis Results for Project Communication

	<i>Intra-project Communication</i>	<i>Extra-project Communication</i>
The amount of information disseminated by project supervisors is satisfactory	.758	
The language we use in our correspondences is familiar to all team members	.847	
I like the channels that we use to share information amongst team members	.844	
I frequently use electronic means to exchange information with team members	.727	
Informal communication amongst team members is usually active	.701	
New information usually circulates amongst project team members in time	.664	
Supervisors are always attentive to what their subordinates have to say	.562	
We have reliable avenues for receiving reactions about our activities in the community		.860
We have always maintained timely communications with external stakeholders		.682
Information concerning our citizenship activities is widely availed to the public		.667
Our external stakeholders like the way we communicate with them		.652
Our information is largely shaped by preferences of the communities we serve		.651
Our external stakeholders are reliably informed of the progress of our citizenship projects		.540
Eigen value	3.526	1.157
Variance, %	52.886	11.571
Cumulative, %	52.886	64.457

viding the user with a lower-dimensional picture when viewed from its most informative viewpoint. A number of meaningful factors explaining a larger percentage of the common item variance emerged, and most items loaded cleanly on the hypothesized constructs exceeding .50 (Tables 2–5). All the items whose factor loadings were below .5 or had cross loadings were dropped and not considered in subsequent analyses because this demonstrated lack of construct validity (a list of dropped items is provided later, in Table 8).

Factor analysis results for project communication yielded two components, which were interpreted as intra-project communication (variance = 53%) and extra-project communication (variance = 12%), both

explaining 64% of the total variance in project communication. Seven-item scales loaded cleanly on the component termed intra-project communication, while six-item scales loaded on the component termed extra-project communication (Table 2).

Individual commitment yielded three components that were interpreted as continuance commitment (variance = 38%), affective commitment (variance = 16%), and normative commitment (variance = 12%). The trio together explained 66% of the variance in individual commitment. Five items loaded on the components termed continuance commitment and affective commitment, while three items loaded on normative commitment (Table 3). The social network yielded two

TABLE 3
Factor Analysis Results for Individual Commitment

	<i>Continuance Commitment</i>	<i>Affective Commitment</i>	<i>Normative Commitment</i>
I think no other activities can match the benefits that citizenship activities present to me	.666		
It would be very hard for me to abandon citizenship activities even if I wanted to	.723		
My life would be upset if I decided not to engage in citizenship activities	.695		
It would be too costly for me to quit citizenship activities right now	.814		
Taking part in citizenship projects is a matter of necessity as much as desire	.600		
I would proudly accept any job assignments related to serving community		.704	
I find that my personal values and those of citizenship projects are very similar		.746	
I feel like part of the family of the citizenship project teams		.603	
I feel emotionally attached to citizenship projects		.859	
I feel a strong sense of belonging to citizenship projects		.710	
I feel I have an obligation to keep performing citizenship activities			.527
I have a sense of obligation to the recipients of citizenship projects			.769
I owe a great deal to citizenship projects			.756
Eigen value	3.433	1.442	1.063
Variance, %	38.146	16.022	11.809
Cumulative, %	38.146	54.168	65.977

TABLE 4
Factor Analysis Results for Social Networks

	<i>Network Transitivity</i>	<i>Network Degree</i>
I think that the beneficiaries of our citizenship projects become our advocates	.651	
I believe that many consumer groups are pleased with our citizenship projects	.823	
Without hesitation I can act on the information that I receive through my teammates	.613	
Community leaders have always welcomed our citizenship projects	.694	
In my view, our citizenship activities are liked by people of diverse interests	.547	
We have united many communities through our citizenship activities	.808	
Many members of the general public know much about our citizenship projects		.659
Through citizenship activities, we have improved the lives of many citizens		.689
We trust that many societies are in support of our citizenship projects		.760
This bank's top management strongly supports citizenship activities		.800
Eigen value	3.114	1.210
Variance, %	49.170	19.102
Cumulative, %	49.170	68.272

components that were interpreted as transitivity (variance = 49%) and network degree (variance = 19%). The duo explained 68% of the variance in social network. Six and four items loaded on the components termed transitivity and network degree, respectively (Table 4).

Perceived project performance yielded four components that were interpreted as quality of outputs by the project team (variance = 42%), enhanced awareness (variance = 9%), time management (variance = 8%), and cost mitigation (variance = 5%). These four explained 64% of the variance in perceived project performance. The component named quality of output featured items such as “I am satisfied with the outcomes

of citizenship activities” (.845) and “I do not doubt the quality of our services to the community” (.793), among others. Enhanced awareness had items such as “Many of our customers are aware of our citizenship activities” (.830) and “Our stakeholders are reliably informed of the progress of our citizenship projects” (.795) as the items with the highest factor loading (Table 5). After factor analysis, the composite measures were arrived at by using the SPSS transform function with the compute procedure to create the variables that represent the average of other variables in the data set. The compute procedure is often used whenever there is need to assign the value of one variable to be a mathematical function of other variables in the data set (to perform this type of

TABLE 5
Factor Analysis Results for Perceived Project Performance

	<i>Quality of Output</i>	<i>Enhanced Awareness</i>	<i>Time Management</i>	<i>Cost Mitigation</i>
Local communities are always happy about our citizenship activities	.668			
Investing in citizenship activities has boosted our profitability	.564			
Our citizenship projects have greatly improved the livelihood of many individuals	.695			
I am satisfied with the outcomes of the citizenship activities this bank has undertaken	.845			
We do not doubt the quality of our services to the community	.793			
To a great extent, the citizenship activities we undertake meet our expectations	.753			
In my view many of our customers are aware of our citizenship activities		.830		
I think that many people have known about this bank through its citizenship activities		.736		
Stakeholders are fully aware of the citizenship projects that this bank is involved in		.517		
Our stakeholders are reliably informed of the progress of our citizenship projects		.795		
We often set reliable time estimates ahead of project implementation			.519	
Our citizenship project team is always committed to beating set deadlines			.793	
We usually provide necessary information to project stakeholders in time			.776	
Our project activities from initiation to closure are always timely			.756	
We often set reliable cost estimates ahead of any citizenship project execution				.696
I think citizenship projects are a cost effective way of promoting this bank				.650
I think citizenship activities have enabled this bank to incur lower costs of operations				.533
Eigen value	8.808	1.855	1.72	1.109
Variance, %	41.943	8.834	8.191	5.282
Cumulative, %	41.943	50.777	58.968	64.249

transformation, we chose Transform → Compute → Target variable → Numerical expression → OK).

Project communication was measured using an abridged version of Goldhaber and Rogers' (1979) Communication Audit Survey (CAS) questionnaire, because it captured the researcher's aspect of study more extensively compared to comparative tools like the information processing perspective by Lievens and Moenaert (2000). Also, the CAS is being used by many researchers today (e.g., Carrière & Bourque, 2009; Downs & Adrian, 2004; Madlock, 2008). Respondents assessed project communication on a 5-point Likert scale of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *not sure* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). Project communication yielded a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of .83 and CVI of .80.

In measuring individual commitment, an abridged version of the employee Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), as developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), was used to assess the commitment of individual members on the project teams because it specifies a clear delineation among the types of organizational commitment, unlike Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974)'s OCQ. This tool has been commonly used by recent researchers (e.g., Brown, 2003). The tool solicited responses on a 5-point Likert scale with the following verbal anchors: *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *not sure* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). Abridged examples of items from the OCQ questionnaire included (a) continuance commitment: "It would be very hard for me to abandon citizenship activities even if I wanted to"; (b) affective commitment: "I find that my personal values and those of citizenship projects are very similar"; and (c) normative commitment: "I think it wouldn't be right for me to avoid taking part in citizenship projects." Individual commitment yielded a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of .867 and CVI of .889.

Social networks were measured using a combination of the network degree and network transitivity (Fowler et al., 2009; Rosenthal, 2007, p. 293). Respondents assessed their perceived network position on a 5-point Likert scale of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *not sure* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). Abridged examples of items used to measure social networks include (a) network degree: "Through citizenship activities, we have improved the lives of many citizens"; and (b) network transitivity: "Without hesitation I can act on the information that I receive through my teammates." Social networks yielded a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of .794 and CVI of .842.

Perceived project performance was measured using an amalgam of the research measures used by Pinto and Slevin (1988) and Shenhar et al. (1997) and the competence areas defined in *A Guide to the Project*

Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) (Project Management Institute, 2008). The two give more rational results regarding perceived project performance and have been used before by researchers such as Ramírez (2002). The responses were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *not sure* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). Perceived project performance yielded a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of .868 and CVI of .714.

Common Methods Bias and Nonresponse Bias

Common method variance is a potential problem when all measurements are provided by a single respondent. Common method variance is the portion of the correlation between two variables that results from sharing a common method of measurement (Kearns & Sabherwal, 2007). Because self-reporting, consistency motif, acquiescence, social desirability, affectivity, and transient mood state lead to common method variance, it is of concern in survey research when sampling perceptual data. Common methods was addressed in two ways: first, using the strategies to ameliorate the problems of self-report data by designing a questionnaire to avoid implying that one response is better than the other, paying attention to wording, avoiding socially accepted responses, avoiding vague concepts, keeping questions simple, specific, and concise, avoiding double-barreled questions, decomposing questions relating to more than one possibility, and avoiding complicated syntax. Common method variance was further assessed using Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The underlying logic for this test is that if common method bias accounts for correlations among variables, then a factor analysis should yield a single factor when all the items are analyzed together. No single factor emerged or one general factor accounted for most of the variance, implying that no substantial common method variance was present. On close examination of the output from unrotated factor solution, discriminant validity was also present.

Nonresponse bias was established in two separate *t*-tests. First, the average values for each of the constructs for the first quartile completed questionnaires received were compared with the last quartile completed questionnaires, allowing the late questionnaires to proxy the perceptions of nonrespondents. Mean differences for each of the constructs did not reveal any significant difference between the early and late questionnaires (two-tailed *t*-tests, $p < .05$). Second, responses were compared by age of projects; again, a comparison of average ages from surveys for the first quartile respondent projects with those for the last quartile projects did not reveal any significant difference in the mean ages (two-tailed *t*-test, $p < .05$). These two comparative tests depicted the absence of nonresponse bias in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated significant positive relationships between all the predictor values and perceived project performance supporting H1, H2, H3, and H4. The results in Table 6 showed that there exists a significant positive relationship between project communication and individual commitment ($r = .623^*$, $p < .01$). The results revealed further that intra-project communication ($r = .667^*$, $p < .01$) and extra-project communication ($r = .640^*$, $p < .01$) are both positively related to individual commitment. It was also highlighted that project communication had a much stronger relationship with normative commitment ($r = .560^*$, $p < .01$) than the other components of individual commitment, that is, continuance and affective commitment, whose correlation coefficients were $r = .325^*$ ($p < .01$) and $r = .547^*$ ($p < .01$), respectively, supporting H1. There is a significant and positive relationship between individual commitment and perceived project performance ($r = .672^*$, $p < .01$). Specifically, it was shown that improvements in continuance, affective, and normative commitment are likely to result in improvements in project performance: $r = .478^*$, $p < .01$; $r = .557^*$, $p < .01$; and $r = .530^*$, $p < .01$, respectively. These results highlight the fact that if individual team members on a given citizenship project are committed to execution of project tasks, the project in question usually succeeds, hence supporting H2. The results reveal that where project members willingly exert more effort to guarantee the success of, say, AIDS reduction campaigns; they will perceive their efforts to have enabled the bank to incur lower costs of operation. The above statement is supported by a coefficient of $r = .530^*$ ($p < .01$). These findings also imply that there are individuals within project management teams who find it just too hard to exclude themselves from the execution of citizenship projects and they perceive their efforts to positively contribute

to performance. This contribution could be in terms of ensuring activities are completed in time and at minimal cost. Project communication and social networks were noted to be positively related ($r = .606^*$, $p < .01$).

The results further revealed that intra-project and extra-project communication are both positively related to social networks and the values for the relationships were $r = .701^*$ ($p < .01$) and $r = .596^*$ ($p < .01$), supporting H3. The results imply that if elements of project communication are improved, for example, ensuring that internal and external meetings are regularly held to exchange information regarding performance of citizenship tasks, the trust among team members could be strengthened. This could be reflected through, for instance, enhanced awareness about the banks' citizenship projects among the members of the general public and the ease with which new and vital information is provided to the bank by the public. Finally, a positive and significant relationship was observed to exist between social networks and perceived project performance ($r = .764^*$, $p < .01$). The findings further indicated that transitivity and network degree are both positively related to perceived project performance and the values for the relationships were $r = .815^*$ ($p < .01$) and $r = .808^*$ ($p < .01$), respectively, also supporting H4. They suggest that if, for example, a wider population of the general public perceive a given bank's citizenship activities to have improved their lives, a majority of the people in the general public will be willing to contribute to that bank's profitability, which could be done through holding active account numbers in that bank.

Consistent with the results above, the regression model shown in Table 7 revealed that project communication ($\beta = .292$, $p < .01$), individual commitment ($\beta = .220$, $p < .01$), and social networks ($\beta = .451$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors of perceived project performance and account for 69.7% of the variance in

TABLE 6
Zero-Order Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Intra-project communication-1	1.000										
Extra-project communication-2	.697*	1.000									
Project communication-3	.858*	.838*	1.000								
Continuance-4	.345*	.443*	.325*	1.000							
Affective-5	.589*	.478*	.547*	.238*	1.000						
Normative-6	.598*	.562*	.560*	.405*	.514*	1.000					
Individual commitment-7	.667*	.640*	.623*	.777*	.767*	.809*	1.000				
Network transitivity-8	.726*	.658*	.680*	.477*	.456*	.564*	.643*	1.000			
Network degree-9	.658*	.624*	.619*	.405*	.405*	.505*	.577*	.784*	1.000		
Social networks-10	.701*	.596*	.606*	.321*	.430*	.528*	.569*	.831*	.829*	1.000	
Perceived project performance-11	.730*	.734*	.722*	.478*	.557*	.530*	.672*	.815*	.808*	.764*	1.000

Note. *Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).

TABLE 7
Regression Model Summary of Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	β			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.960	.181		5.292	.000		
Project communication	.272	.063	.292	4.313	.000	.482	2.075
Individual commitment	.190	.056	.220	3.420	.001	.534	1.873
Social networks	.281	.040	.451	7.062	.000	.544	1.838
Dependent variable: perceived project performance							
R^2	.703						
Adjusted R^2	.697		Sig.	.000			

TABLE 8
List of Items Dropped From Data Analysis

Project communication items that were dropped
Am satisfied with the amount of information I receive from my supervisor(s)
We always hold meetings to share information regarding performance of our tasks
I believe each of my co-workers has the appropriate communication skills
I always hold face to face communications with co-workers
We have a policy on communication that guides our interactions
The media we use when communicating with community are those they like
We always use the language that community understand well when talking to them
We usually use electronic means to convey information to the community
Individual commitment items that were dropped
I really feel as if the challenges that community faces are my own
I am willing to exert more effort to guarantee successful execution of citizenship activities
Extending a serving hand to the community deserves my loyalty
I think it wouldn't be right for me to avoid taking part in citizenship activities
I would feel guilty to abscond from taking part in citizenship activities
Social networks items that were dropped
We at times partner with NGOs and government ministries in carrying out citizenship activities
I find time to interact with people outside my work team
I have many sources from which I can get the information I need to do my job well
I always interact freely with most of my teammates
I enjoy trusting relationships with most of my workmates
I love telling others about the various activities of this bank
I always say something new to my teammates every time we meet
I think many people have benefited from more than one of our citizenship projects
I like interacting freely with a diversity of people in the communities we serve
Perceived project performance items that were dropped
I think investing in citizenship activities has enhanced this bank's publicity
Our citizenship projects have greatly improved our social relations with society
Often, the actual money we spend on citizenship activities is less than the budgeted
We often get volunteers in the society who carry out some of our roles free of charge

perceived project performance (adjusted $R^2 = .697$). These findings further reveal that social networks are a better predictor of performance than all the rest of the variables ($\beta = .451, p < .01$). The variance inflation factor (VIF) was less than 4 and tolerance ratio was above 0.1, indicating that multicollinearity in this study was not a problem (Garson, 2010). As such, the interpretations of the β weights and R^2 values were reliable.

In Uganda, citizenship projects are largely shaped by the preferences of the communities for which they are intended. The results show that when individuals recognize that they are cared for, they become more committed and conscious about their responsibilities, they take greater involvement in the executing tasks, and they are more innovative. As long as a project delivers as expected, its stakeholders remain committed to the project's values. These results solidify the argument of Cockburn and Highsmith (2001), Chow and Cao (2008), and Riketta (2002) who argue that individual commitment is a major antecedent of project performance and that the overall performance of a project is a function of the individual commitment of each participant in the project. The commitment of internal stakeholders to execution of citizenship project tasks is likely to improve performance. Of the three aspects of individual commitment, affective commitment was found to have the strongest relationship with perceived project performance. These results imply that individuals whose willingness to devote utmost energy and loyalty to a project is derived from the similarity of their personal values to those of citizenship projects and will ignite higher performance levels in citizenship projects than normative and continuance commitment. These results indicate that where the workers conceal their inner self and work primarily for extrinsic rewards, the project is put at a risk of experiencing poor quality output (Nangoli, 2010).

The results further revealed that intra-project and extra-project communications are both positively related to social networks and indicated that transitivity and network degree are both positively related to perceived project performance. This indicates that where

project managers listen to other stakeholders and incorporate their views in the decisions they implement, over time, many stakeholders are likely to be propelled to act as the bank's advocates and may be depended on by the bank as marketing agents. These findings are in agreement with those of Granovater (1973) and Herkt (2007), who showed that reinforced relationships over-time become dependable. Furthermore, the findings support the fact that project communication determines the extent to which a particular project wins the collective support and efforts of team members, which is in line with Cooke-Davies (2002) and Jugdvev and Muller (2005). The results also meant that efforts to promote effective communications through making timely information available to stakeholders leads to strengthening of the relationships that exist among stakeholders. The results are in agreement with Rasbery and Lamoine (1986), who argued that consideration of the recipient's preferences in terms of time and means of communication brings about building of trust among the two parties. These findings also implied that when the societies within which a commercial bank operates are in support of its citizenship projects, the bank incurs lower cost on implementation of such projects. This could be in terms of the locals availing some free labor during implementation. It could be in form of having locals actively pass on the information to other locals at no cost. These findings are in agreement with those of Hogg and Adamic (2004), who signified that social networks act as a vehicle for quickly and easily getting the project message to the intended audience, thereby enhancing awareness and the bank's public image at large. The findings also revealed that social networks provide the shared maintenance necessary to calm down high stress levels and enable achievement of not only timely but also quality output. These findings also reflect studies by Pinto (2000), who argued that there is a need to develop a network of other experts who can be called on for assistance. Conclusively, project communication, individual commitment, and social networks are significant predictors of perceived project performance in Uganda. The order of their prediction power based on the β weights was social networks, project communication, and individual commitment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Unless project sponsors and champions ensure that other project stakeholders have been provided with and are satisfied with the availed project information, the efforts (both financial and otherwise) invested into citizenship projects could be seen as having been fruitless. In the same vein, where project supervisors are

not as attentive to their subordinates' views and no appropriate avenues have been designated to capture feedback from implementers and beneficiaries of the project, there will be a high chance of failure of citizenship projects. The project managers in charge of citizenship projects in commercial banks should ensure commitment of project staff to achievement of projects by creating an atmosphere of feeling like they (project staff) are part of the project implementation team "family." This could be accomplished through fulfilling the promises that top managers set forth. In this way, the various stakeholders involved in implementation are likely to perceive the project as a success. This study has extended the research frontiers in understanding the role of interpersonal factors (project communication, individual commitment, and social networks) in perceived project performance. Despite many studies on project success, very few have focused on the role of interpersonal factors; yet, as indicated by findings, these factors play a significant role. Projects are about managing expectations that have to do with perceptions of success. When researchers are conceptualizing and building theories, they should not ignore interpersonal factors.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although the study provides some interesting findings and makes an important contribution to the project performance literature, there are latent limitations worth noting. The data collection instrument was a standard questionnaire, which usually limits the ability to collect views about information outside asked questions. Future research should use interviews to solicit unstructured views about the performance of these projects. The study used a cross-sectional research design, and the behaviors of the variables over a long time could not be completely analyzed; this restricts the applicability of the findings as a longitudinal study may give different results from the ones that were obtained for this study. Future researchers should use a larger sample involving other stakeholders like the regulators, customers, and the local population, among others. This should be done because the study only captured the perceptions of bank staff that had taken part in executing citizenship projects and was intended to justify the continued investment in citizenship projects by commercial banks, yet accommodation of various stakeholders could give a different view. The use of a questionnaire where all the data were collected in the same measurement context using a common rater and with common item context could have led to common methods bias. Future studies should also try to obtain measurements of the independent and dependent variables from

different sources and at different times. The purpose of this study was to establish correlations, not causality (although correlation is necessary for linear causation in the absence of any third and countervailing causative variable and can indicate possible causes or areas for further investigation; in other words, correlation gives a hint). This research has identified and explained some correlations between these variables and should be used as a basis for additional work to look further into causality. Structural equation modeling in which parameters are estimated by minimizing the discrepancy between the model-implied covariance matrix and the observed covariance matrix could be employed. Structural equation modeling is deemed more appropriate because it is a confirmatory approach that provides explicit test statistics for establishing convergent and discriminant validity important to such research, tests an overall model rather than individual coefficients, estimates causality, allows for error terms, and reduces measurement error through the use of multiple indicators.

Conclusively, this study revealed that project communication, individual commitment, and social networks were significant predictors of perceived project performance for citizenship projects and that social network was a better predictor of performance than all the rest of the variables. There is a need to develop and maintain effective project communication and good relationships in particular individual commitment and social networks to achieve better project performance, and this study will be used as a basis for additional work to look further into causality.

NOTE

*Significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).

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