

EMPIRICAL ARTICLE

The Effect of Top Management Team Social Capital on Bank Performance in Ghana: The Mediating Role of Liquidity and the Moderating Role of Management Commitment

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Abstract

Purpose – The recent banking crisis in Ghana has generated considerable debate about liquidity management and the competence of bank management teams. This study evaluates the effect of top management team social capital on bank performance, while examining the mediating role of liquidity and the moderating role of management commitment.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Using a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, data were collected from 350 valid responses obtained from management personnel in commercial banks in Accra, Ghana. The study focuses on three dimensions of social capital: network intensity, trust, and collaboration. Quantitative analyses were complemented with semi-structured interviews.

Findings – Network intensity, trust, and liquidity positively influence bank performance. Liquidity does not mediate the relationship between social capital and bank performance. Management commitment moderates the relationships between network intensity and liquidity, and between trust and liquidity.

Practical Implications – The findings underline the importance of social relationships, trust-building, and effective liquidity management for bank performance and stability in the Ghanaian banking sector.

Originality/Value – Previous studies have examined multiple determinants of bank performance, but this study specifically focuses on top management team social capital and examines both the mediating role of liquidity and the moderating role of management commitment.

KEYWORDS

social capital; network intensity; trust; collaboration; liquidity; bank performance; top management team; Ghana.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social capital is recognised as a valuable resource embedded in relationships that can be exploited to achieve economic performance (Burt 2004, Lin 2017). Over the years, researchers have defined social capital as goodwill embedded in relationships that produce trust

with future implications (Biggart and Castanias 2001). In organisations, social capital represents the relationships between organisations and individuals that create value. Management teams' networking intensity, trusting relationships, and collaboration with other organisations constitute valuable resources that yield reciprocal benefits (Adler and Kwon 2002, Gorzelany-Plesińska and Lazarev 2025).

In the banking industry, social capital links banks through social relationships, facilitating the transfer of funds, overlapping membership, and professional networks (Laumann et al. 1978). It encompasses communication networks and norms that provide clients and stakeholders with opportunities to participate in collaborative activities for mutual

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gain. Several researchers have indicated that banks benefit not only from financial liquidity but also from social relationships with customers that enhance daily performance (Al-Emran et al. 2024). This suggests that banking is fundamentally built on relationships between actors.

A top management team (TMT) is a group of senior executives appointed by the chief executive officer and assigned critical tasks. Their core function includes strategic management and decision-making, which are essential to driving organisational objectives (Hambrick and Mason 1984). According to upper echelon theory (Koufopoulos et al. 2008), financial decision-making in organisations is not the preserve of an individual but rather the collective responsibility of the top management team.

The concept of trust has been established as essential in relationship literature, where exchange relationships exist between parties (Atuahene-Gima and Li 2002). Trust is considered the most important element in relationships between financial institutions. While trust influences customers' decisions to purchase banking products, it is considered a fragile component of banks, especially during crises (Beloglavec and Šebjan 2015, Schuetz et al. 2025). The complexity of trust has made it an important phenomenon studied across economics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Boeckmann and Tyler 2002, Fehr 2009, Bleidorn et al. 2023).

The recent banking crisis in Ghana (2017–2019) led to the collapse of several indigenous banks, sparking intense debate about liquidity management, regulatory oversight, and management competence. The Bank of Ghana revoked the licences of nine banks between August 2017 and August 2019 due to severe capital impairment, liquidity challenges, and governance failures. These failures eroded public confidence in the banking sector and highlighted critical weaknesses in management decision-making and stakeholder relationships. In such crisis contexts, the quality of collective managerial sensemaking and decision processes becomes particularly important, as organisational responses depend not only on formal structures but also on how senior actors interpret uncertainty and coordinate action (De Vittoris et al. 2023).

Despite the critical role of social capital in organisational performance, limited empirical research has examined how top management teams' social capital, specifically their network intensity, trust-building capacity, and collaborative relationships, affects bank performance in Ghana. Furthermore, the mechanisms through which social capital translates into performance outcomes, particularly the roles of liquidity and management commitment, remain poorly understood in the Ghanaian banking context.

The fragility of trust in the banking sector, combined with liquidity management challenges, necessitates a comprehensive investigation of how top management teams can leverage social capital to enhance bank performance. This study addresses this gap by examining the direct effects of social capital dimensions on bank performance, the mediating role of liquidity, and the moderating influence of management commitment.

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of the top management team's social capital on bank performance in Ghana.

Specific objectives were to evaluate the effect of the top management team's social capital on bank performance, to examine the mediating role of liquidity on the relationship between the top management team's social capital and bank performance, and to determine the moderating role of management commitment on the relationship between the top management team's social capital and liquidity.

Accordingly, this study investigates how the top management team's social capital, captured through network intensity, trust, and collaboration, affects bank performance, the extent to which bank liquidity mediates the relationship between top management social capital and performance, and the conditions under which management commitment moderates the relationship between top management social capital and liquidity.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Theoretical framework

This study adopted the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm as its primary theoretical framework (Barney 1991, Barney and Hesterly 2012). The RBV posits that competitive advantages and superior performance emanate from firms' possession and control of internal resources and competencies that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. The relevance of RBV to this study lies in its fundamental assumptions about the sources of organisational competitive advantage, which align with the capabilities of social capital, liquidity, and management commitment.

For commercial banks, key intangible resources, such as strong brands, firm reputation, strong customer relationships, collaborative abilities, and tacit knowledge, contribute to generating unique competitive advantages that guarantee superior performance and profitability (Crook et al. 2008, Harjoto et al. 2023, Grant 1991). Social capital, conceptualised as network intensity, trust, and collaboration, represents an intangible strategic resource that can create sustainable competitive advantage.

2.2 | Determinants of bank performance

Social capital theory provides the foundation for understanding how relationships and networks create value (Burt 2004, Lin 2017). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) identified three dimensions of social capital: structural (network ties and configuration), relational (trust and reciprocity), and cognitive (shared language and narratives). This study focuses on the structural (network intensity), relational (trust), and behavioural manifestations (collaboration) of social capital within top management teams.

Network intensity is the frequency and strength of direct connections among actors within a network (Ho 2025, El-Khatib et al. 2015). Research suggests that frequent interactions among top management facilitate information exchange, resource sharing, and collective

problem-solving (Collins and Clark 2003). In banking, network intensity enables management to access critical market information, identify business opportunities, and coordinate responses to competitive challenges.

H1: Network intensity has a significant positive influence on bank performance.

Trust is confidence that parties in a relationship place in one another, grounded in reliability and honesty (Morgan and Hunt 1994, Kwon and Suh 2005). It is fundamental to success in global financial markets (Eisingerich and Bell 2007). Banks with high-trust relationships experience increased customer loyalty, reduced transaction costs, and improved information flow (Dimitriades 2006). Trust among members of the management team facilitates cooperative decision-making and stakeholder engagement.

H2: Trust has a significant positive influence on bank performance.

Collaboration is the cooperative engagement among firms or actors who commit resources to common objectives (Agranoff and McGuire 2003, Oussii and Boulila Taktak 2024). In banking, collaboration involves maintaining close relationships with customers throughout the service cycle and coordinating with other institutions for mutual benefit (Bai et al. 2023, Odekerken-Schröder and Fassnacht 2013).

H3: Collaboration has a significant positive influence on bank performance.

The Bank for International Settlements (Bank for International Settlements 2008) defined liquidity as the ability of a bank to finance increases in assets and pay liabilities as they fall due without incurring disproportionate losses. Adequate liquidity is essential for banks to meet withdrawal demands, extend credit, and maintain operational stability (Yousaf et al. 2024). Studies have shown positive relationships between liquidity and profitability metrics such as return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) (Kosmidou 2008, Ajayi and Lawal 2021).

H4: Liquidity has a significant positive influence on bank performance.

2.3 | Mediating role of liquidity

Social capital may influence bank performance indirectly through its effect on liquidity. Network intensity facilitates access to funding sources and interbank relationships, thereby enhancing liquidity positions (Charmlier et al. 2018). Trust-based relationships with depositors ensure a stable funding base, while collaborative arrangements provide liquidity support mechanisms (Bordeleau and Graham 2010).

H5: Liquidity mediates the positive relationship between network intensity and bank performance.

H6: Liquidity mediates the positive relationship between trust and bank performance.

H7: Liquidity mediates the positive relationship between collaboration and bank performance.

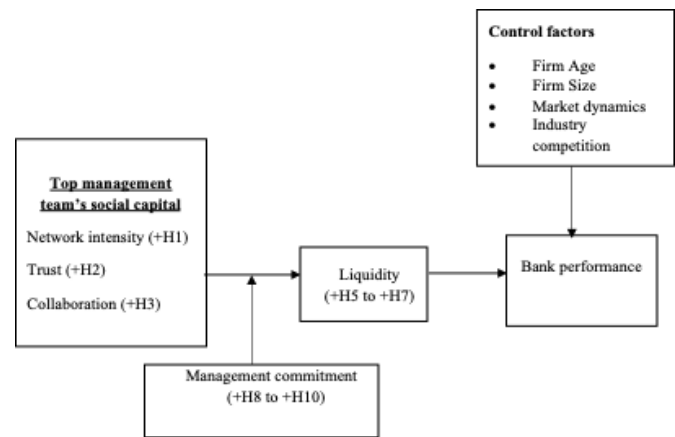


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model.

2.4 | Moderating role of management commitment

Management commitment is the extent to which top management is genuinely aligned with and involved in pursuing organisational goals (Homburg et al. 2002). Committed management teams are more likely to leverage social capital effectively to enhance liquidity management (Millman and Wilson 1999). The interaction between social capital and management commitment may amplify the effects on liquidity.

H8: Management commitment moderates the relationship between network intensity and liquidity.

H9: Management commitment moderates the relationship between trust and liquidity.

H10: Management commitment moderates the relationship between collaboration and liquidity.

Figure 1 depicts the study's conceptual framework, showing the proposed direct effects of top management team social capital dimensions on bank performance, the mediating role of liquidity, and the moderating role of management commitment.

3 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Research context

The study was conducted in Ghana's banking sector, focusing on 23 universal banks operating in Accra, Ghana's capital, in 2019. Ghana's banking industry has undergone significant transformation, including recapitalisation requirements, consolidation, and regulatory reforms following the 2017–2019 banking crisis. This context provided a relevant setting for examining how management social capital influences bank performance during periods of institutional change and stakeholder uncertainty.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with five senior managers drawn from different universal banks in Ghana. These exploratory interviews focused on clarifying the key dimensions of top management social capital, liquidity management practices, and performance indicators that were most salient in the Ghanaian banking context. Insights from the interviews informed the wording and contextual adaptation of the questionnaire items, helped us verify the suitability of existing scales, and guided decisions about the appropriate managerial population to target in each bank. This preliminary qualitative phase therefore provided empirical grounding for our methodological choices regarding both instrument design and the construction of the sampling frame.

3.2 | Population and sampling

The target population comprised board members and management personnel from 23 commercial banks in Ghana. Each bank was estimated to have approximately 50 board and management personnel, yielding a total population of 1,150 individuals. This population was selected because these individuals possess decision-making authority and knowledge of strategic issues affecting bank performance.

Using Daniel's (1999) formula for sample size calculation with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a sample of 430 respondents was determined. The quantitative phase had 430 respondents selected through random sampling from the list of management personnel obtained from the Central Bank of Ghana. Random sampling ensured representativeness and generalisability, while purposive sampling for qualitative inquiry targeted information-rich participants with deep knowledge of the phenomena under study (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The sampling frame included all top- and middle-management staff of universal banks operating in Ghana as of December 2022, as listed in the Prudential Returns and the licensed banks register of the Bank of Ghana. From the Central Bank, we obtained a complete list of management personnel for each of the 23 banks, including names, roles, and official email addresses.

To create the sampling frame, we first excluded non-managerial staff and outsourced personnel, then verified the list with the human resource departments of each bank to remove duplicates and staff who had left during the study period. This process resulted in a final sampling frame of eligible managers across the 23 banks.

We then employed simple random sampling within banks to ensure representativeness. Using a random-number generator in Excel, we assigned a unique ID to each eligible manager and selected the required number of respondents, proportionate to each bank's share of the total management population (proportionate stratified random sampling). For example, a bank accounting for 8% of all managers in the sampling frame contributed approximately 8% of the selected respondents. Replacement rules were pre-specified: if a selected manager declined or was unavailable after three contact attempts, another manager was randomly drawn from the same bank's list. This procedure helped maintain both randomness and coverage across all 23 banks.

3.3 | Data collection and measurement scales

A structured questionnaire with two main sections was administered face-to-face to management personnel. Section A included items measuring independent variables (network intensity, trust, collaboration), the mediating variable (liquidity), the moderating variable (management commitment), and the dependent variable (bank performance). Section B included demographic characteristics of respondents and participating banks.

All constructs were measured using established scales from prior research, adapted to the Ghanaian banking context. Items were measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: A, which inquired about the independent variables and the main dependent variables, and B, which gathered information on respondents' demographic characteristics. The demographic section aimed to collect data on respondents and the features of the participating banks. Items in this section included respondents' age and gender, their education, and the firm's average income. The sources of the measures used in the study are provided in Table 1.

Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, only 350 valid responses were obtained, representing a 70% response rate.

3.4 | Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0. The analytical procedure began with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the dimensionality and factor structure of the constructs, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients, whereas validity was evaluated through convergent validity, using average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50), and discriminant validity, based on the criterion proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and correlations, were also computed. To test the hypothesised relationships, hierarchical regression analysis was used for the direct and moderating effects, while bootstrap mediation analysis with 5,000 resamples was conducted using Hayes (2016)' PROCESS macro to assess the indirect effects.

Model fit indices for CFA included $\chi^2/df < 3.0$, RMSEA < 0.08, CFI > 0.90, GFI > 0.90, TLI > 0.90, NFI > 0.90, IFI > 0.90, and SRMR < 0.06 (Hair et al. 2010, Fornell and Larcker 1981, Hu and Bentler 1999).

TABLE 1 Measurement sources

Construct	Number of items	Source
Network intensity	5	Ho (2025), El-Khatib et al. (2015)
Trust	3	Aulakh et al. (1996)
Collaboration	4	Howard et al. (2016)
Liquidity	4	Yousaf et al. (2024)
Bank performance	4	Atuahene-Gima et al. (2005)
Commitment	4	Morgan and Hunt (1994)

4 | RESULTS

The sample comprised 350 respondents from 23 commercial banks. Male respondents accounted for 68.3%, while females made up 31.7%. Most respondents (62.6%) were aged 36–50 years, reflecting the mature age profile of senior management in Ghana's banking sector. Educational attainment was high, with 71.4% holding master's degrees and 14.6% holding doctoral qualifications. Average management experience was 12.7 years ($SD = 4.8$).

Participating banks varied in size: 34.3% reported total assets exceeding GHS11 million, while the average employee count across all banks was 104. Bank operating years were diverse, with 41.7% operating for 16+ years and 28.6% operating for 10–15 years.

4.1 | Measurement model assessment

4.1.1 | Exploratory factor analysis

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation confirmed the dimensionality of constructs. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.892, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4826.341$, $p < 0.001$), indicating suitability for factor analysis. Items loaded cleanly on their respective factors with loadings ranging from 0.586 to 0.891.

4.1.2 | Confirmatory factor analysis

Two CFA models were tested. Model 1 (main variables) yielded $\chi^2 = 584.109$, $df = 304$, $\chi^2/df = 1.921$, RMSEA = 0.051, GFI = 0.900, CFI = 0.937, NFI = 0.900, IFI = 0.938, TLI = 0.922, and SRMR = 0.052. Model 2 (control variables) yielded $\chi^2 = 104.187$, $df = 71$, $\chi^2/df = 1.467$, RMSEA = 0.037, GFI = 0.964, CFI = 0.986, NFI = 0.958, IFI = 0.986, TLI = 0.979, and SRMR = 0.049. All fit indices met recommended thresholds, confirming good model fit. Standardised factor loadings ranged from 0.643 to 0.894, all significant at $p < 0.001$.

TABLE 2 Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	AVE
Network intensity	4	0.842	0.521
Trust	3	0.891	0.713
Collaboration	4	0.872	0.626
Management commitment	5	0.838	0.500
Liquidity	5	0.867	0.544
Bank performance	4	0.834	0.508

4.1.3 | Reliability and validity

As shown in Table 2, all Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded 0.70, confirming internal consistency reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) values approached or exceeded 0.50 for most constructs, supporting convergent validity. The square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs, confirming discriminant validity. Harman's single-factor test showed the first factor accounted for only 8.789% of total variance, well below the 50% threshold, indicating no serious common method bias.

4.2 | Descriptive statistics and correlations

As shown in Table 3, network intensity recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.398$), indicating strong agreement that top management engages in frequent networking. Trust ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.622$) and collaboration ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.486$) also scored highly. Bank performance was strong ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.550$). Liquidity was moderate ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.830$), while management commitment was rated slightly below the midpoint ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.606$).

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between bank performance and network intensity ($r = .450$, $p < 0.01$), trust ($r = .538$, $p < 0.01$), and collaboration ($r = .297$, $p < 0.01$). However, liquidity showed no significant correlation with bank performance ($r = -.032$, $p > 0.10$). Surprisingly, network intensity negatively correlated with liquidity ($r = -.138$, $p < 0.01$).

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Network intensity	4.64	0.398	1					
2. Trust	4.53	0.622	.393**	1				
3. Collaboration	4.55	0.486	.432**	.333**	1			
4. Management commitment	3.91	0.606	-.088	-.008	-.038	1		
5. Liquidity	3.44	0.830	-.138**	-.075	.033	-.047	1	
6. Bank performance	4.57	0.550	.450**	.538**	.297**	-.051	-.032	1

4.3 | Hypothesis testing

4.3.1 | Direct effects on liquidity

As shown in Table 4, network intensity ($\beta = 0.606, t = 7.941, p < 0.001$) and trust ($\beta = 0.176, t = 3.780, p < 0.001$) positively influenced liquidity. However, collaboration showed an unexpected negative relationship ($\beta = -1.092, t = -3.269, p < 0.001$). The model explained 41.0% of the variance in liquidity, with social capital dimensions contributing an additional 33.6% beyond the control variables.

4.3.2 | Direct effects on bank performance

As indicated in Table 5, H1 was supported: network intensity positively influenced bank performance ($\beta = 0.194, t = 2.737, p < 0.01$). H2 was supported: trust positively influenced bank performance ($\beta = 0.305, t = 7.584, p < 0.001$), showing the strongest effect. H3 was not supported: collaboration was not significantly related to bank performance ($\beta = -0.013, t = -0.247, p > 0.10$). H4 was supported: liquidity positively influenced bank performance ($\beta = 0.291, t = 6.353, p < 0.001$). The model explained 45.6% of the variance in bank performance, with independent variables contributing 40.1% of the variance beyond the control variables.

4.3.3 | Moderating effects of management commitment

With reference to Table 6, H8 was supported: management commitment significantly moderated the relationship between network intensity and liquidity ($\beta = 0.238, t = 3.127, p < 0.01$). H9 was supported: management commitment moderated the trust–liquidity relationship ($\beta = 0.120, t = 1.951, p < 0.05$). H10 was not supported: the collaboration–commitment interaction was non-significant ($\beta = -0.015, t = -0.170, p > 0.10$). Interaction terms explained an additional 1.7% of variance in liquidity beyond main effects.

4.3.4 | Mediating effects of liquidity

As shown in Table 7, H5, H6, and H7 were not supported. All confidence intervals included zero, indicating that liquidity did not mediate the relationships between social capital dimensions and bank performance.

5 | DISCUSSION

The positive, significant relationship between network intensity and bank performance (H1 supported) confirms that frequent, high-quality connections among top management enhance organisational outcomes. This finding aligns with social capital theory, suggesting that intensive networking facilitates access to resources, information sharing, and collective problem-solving (Collins and Clark 2003). In Ghana's banking context, network intensity enables management to navigate regulatory changes, respond to competitive threats, and identify strategic opportunities. The resource-based view explains this relationship: network ties constitute intangible strategic resources that are difficult for competitors to replicate, thereby creating sustainable competitive advantage (Barney 1991). Managers with extensive networks can mobilise resources quickly during crises, access market intelligence, and build coalitions for industry advocacy. This finding aligns with international evidence that social capital enhances firm performance. However, the effect size ($\beta = 0.194$) was moderate, suggesting that network intensity alone is insufficient and must be complemented by other strategic resources and capabilities.

Trust had the strongest positive effect on bank performance ($\beta = 0.305$, H2 supported), confirming its critical role in banking relationships (Eisingerich and Bell 2007, Dimitriadis 2006). This result aligns with prior research showing that trust reduces transaction costs, enhances customer loyalty, and facilitates cooperative behaviour (Pastor and Tortosa-Ausina 2006, Sydow and Helfen 2023). In Ghana, where banking crises have eroded public confidence, trust is even more salient. Banks with trusted management teams attract and retain deposits, access interbank credit markets more easily, and receive regulatory forbearance during temporary difficulties. Trust within top management teams enables frank discussions, reduces monitoring costs, and accelerates decision-making.

Contrary to expectations, collaboration showed no significant relationship with bank performance (H3 not supported). This unexpected finding contrasts with literature emphasising the benefits of collaboration (Agranoff and McGuire 2003, Oussii and Boulila Taktak 2024, Bleidorn et al. 2023). Collaboration may fail to translate into improved bank performance for several reasons. First, it entails coordination costs, as it requires significant time, resources, and managerial attention, and in Ghana's competitive banking environment, this can divert resources from core operations without commensurate returns. Second, effective collaboration depends on selecting compatible partners, yet banks may

TABLE 4 Direct effects on liquidity

Predictor	β	t	Result
Network intensity $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	0.606	7.941***	Supported
Trust $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	0.176	3.780***	Supported
Collaboration $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	-1.092	-3.269***	Not supported
Model $R^2 = 0.410$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.336$, $F = 48.625$ * **			

TABLE 5 Direct effects on bank performance

Predictor	β	t	Result
Network intensity $\rightarrow$ Bank performance	0.194	2.737**	H1 supported
Trust $\rightarrow$ Bank performance	0.305	7.584***	H2 supported
Collaboration $\rightarrow$ Bank performance	-0.013	-0.247	H3 not supported
Liquidity $\rightarrow$ Bank performance	0.291	6.353***	H4 supported
Model $R^2 = 0.456$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.401$, $F = 62.858$ * **			

enter relationships that lack strategic fit and therefore yield limited benefits. Third, our study captures general collaborative tendencies rather than specific high-value partnerships, and not all collaborations generate the same level of value. Finally, the benefits of collaboration may materialise only over longer time horizons than those reflected in the performance indicators used in this study. This interpretation is consistent with Lissillour and Sahut (2022), who show that collaborative arrangements create value only when they are supported by legitimacy, alignment, and mutually recognised roles, rather than by collaboration in itself. This suggests that the quality, effectiveness, and strategic fit of collaboration may matter more than the mere presence or frequency of collaborative relationships (Murray and Kotabe 2005, Wang et al. 2015).

Liquidity positively influenced bank performance ($\beta = 0.291$; H4 supported), confirming its fundamental importance (Bank for International Settlements 2008, Yousaf et al. 2024). Banks with adequate liquid assets can meet withdrawal demands, extend credit opportunistically, and avoid fire sales of assets during periods of stress. This finding aligns with Kosmidou (2008), Ajayi and Lawal (2021), and Lartey et al. (2013), who documented positive liquidity–profitability relationships. However, the

relationship is non-linear. Excessive liquidity may reduce profitability because holding too many low-yielding liquid assets creates opportunity costs and limits the bank's ability to deploy funds into more profitable uses (Nguyen et al. 2017, Bordeleau and Graham 2010). Ghanaian banks must balance liquidity needs with profitability objectives, maintaining sufficient buffers without excessive conservatism. Effective liquidity management is a dynamic capability that confers competitive advantage under RBV.

Contrary to hypotheses H5–H7, liquidity did not mediate relationships between social capital dimensions and bank performance. Although both social capital variables and liquidity independently influenced performance, the indirect pathways were non-significant. This finding suggests that social capital and liquidity operate through independent mechanisms rather than a sequential causal chain. Network intensity and trust may enhance performance through channels unrelated to liquidity, including revenue generation, cost efficiency, innovation, and risk management. Alternatively, liquidity may be more determined by regulatory requirements, balance sheet structure, and funding mix

TABLE 6 Moderating effects of management commitment

Interaction term	β	t	Result
Network intensity $\times$ Commitment $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	0.238	3.127**	H8 supported
Trust $\times$ Commitment $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	0.120	1.951*	H9 supported
Collaboration $\times$ Commitment $\rightarrow$ Liquidity	-0.015	-0.170	H10 not supported
$\Delta R^2 = 0.017$, $F = 3.357$ *			

TABLE 7 Mediation analysis results

Indirect path	Coefficient	95% CI lower	95% CI upper	Result
Network intensity $\rightarrow$ Liquidity $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.1871	-0.2185	0.3612	H5 not supported
Trust $\rightarrow$ Liquidity $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.0471	-0.1169	0.2125	H6 not supported
Collaboration $\rightarrow$ Liquidity $\rightarrow$ Performance	-0.0172	-0.1476	0.2732	H7 not supported

than by social capital. Although network intensity showed a positive correlation with liquidity in the regression analysis, this relationship did not translate into a significant mediation effect.

Management commitment significantly moderated the relationships between network intensity and liquidity (H8 supported) and between trust and liquidity (H9 supported). These findings indicate that social capital's effects on liquidity are contingent on management commitment levels (Homburg et al. 2002, Millman and Wilson 1999). When top management demonstrates strong commitment to organisational goals, they more effectively leverage networks to secure funding and manage cash flows. Similarly, committed managers translate trust-based relationships into tangible liquidity benefits by maintaining open communication with depositors and creditors.

This interaction effect highlights that social capital alone is insufficient; it requires managerial intention and effort to yield operational outcomes. Under the RBV, this suggests that competitive advantage emerges from the combination of resources (social capital) and dynamic capabilities (committed management that leverages those resources). This interpretation is also in line with recent work showing that managerial and leadership-related factors can significantly condition the strength of organisational relationships with performance outcomes (Tackie et al. 2025). The non-significant moderation for collaboration (H10 not supported) mirrors the main effect, suggesting fundamental challenges with collaboration in this context.

6 | CONCLUSION

This study examined how top management team social capital influences bank performance in Ghana, with a particular focus on liquidity and management commitment mechanisms. The findings show that network intensity and trust significantly enhance bank performance, with trust having the strongest effect. These social capital dimensions constitute valuable intangible resources that confer a competitive advantage. Liquidity independently contributes to bank performance, underscoring the importance of financial stability and operational flexibility.

Collaboration showed no significant performance effects, suggesting that not all forms of social capital benefit banks equally and that collaborative relationships require careful strategic management. Liquidity does not mediate social capital-performance relationships, indicating that these variables operate through independent pathways rather than sequential mechanisms. Management commitment amplifies the effects of network intensity and trust on liquidity, highlighting the importance of managerial intentionality in translating social capital into operational outcomes.

These findings contribute to theory by integrating the resource-based view and social capital perspectives in the banking context, demonstrating that intangible relational resources complement traditional financial resources. The study also extends understanding of social capital's boundary conditions, showing that benefits are not universal across all dimensions and contexts.

6.1 | Theoretical contributions

This research advances theoretical understanding in several ways. From a resource-based view perspective, the study shows that intangible resources such as network ties and trust confer competitive advantage in banking, supporting RBV's core proposition (Barney 1991, Barney and Hesterly 2012). At the same time, the finding that not all social resources (for example, collaboration) generate value suggests that RBV should be refined to account more explicitly for resource complementarity and activation mechanisms.

With respect to social capital theory, the study disaggregates social capital into network intensity, trust, and collaboration and reveals differential effects across these dimensions (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). This implies that future research should avoid treating social capital as a monolithic construct and instead examine specific mechanisms and contextual contingencies.

The findings also speak to upper echelon theory. By focusing on top management teams, the study confirms that executive characteristics and relationships shape organisational outcomes (Hambrick and Mason 1984, Koufopoulos et al. 2008), and that the moderating role of management commitment indicates that TMT motivation and effort are critical to activating the performance potential of social capital.

Finally, the study contributes to banking theory by enriching understanding of performance determinants beyond traditional financial metrics. It shows that relational factors significantly influence bank success, particularly in emerging markets characterised by information asymmetries and trust deficits.

6.2 | Practical implications

6.2.1 | For bank management

Senior managers should invest in building professional networks by actively cultivating them through industry associations, conferences, and peer-to-peer engagements, as network intensity facilitates information access and resource organisation. They should also prioritise trust development; given trust's strong effect, banks need to emphasise transparent communication, ethical conduct, and reliable service delivery so that trust-building becomes a strategic priority rather than merely a public relations exercise. At the same time, banks must be selective in their collaborations, as not all partnerships create value, and opportunities should be carefully evaluated for strategic fit and clear value propositions before committing resources.

Institutions should also balance liquidity and profitability: while liquidity supports performance, excessive conservatism reduces returns; therefore, banks ought to adopt dynamic liquidity management strategies that respond to market conditions and regulatory requirements. Finally, enhancing management commitment is essential, and leadership

development programmes should emphasise organisational commitment by aligning individual and collective goals to ensure that managers effectively leverage social capital.

6.2.2 | For regulators and policymakers

Banking supervision should recognise the role of social capital by extending its focus beyond capital and liquidity ratios to include assessments of management quality, governance effectiveness, and stakeholder relationships. Regulators can also promote industry collaboration by facilitating constructive engagement through industry working groups, information-sharing platforms, and public-private partnerships, while closely monitoring potential anti-competitive behaviour. Following the 2017–2019 banking crisis, the Bank of Ghana and industry stakeholders should prioritise restoring trust through transparency, accountability, and robust consumer protection measures.

In addition, regulators should support professional development by encouraging banks to invest in management training that strengthens networking capabilities, ethical leadership, and stakeholder engagement skills.

6.2.3 | For investors and shareholders

In assessing bank investments, investors should evaluate management quality by considering not only financial metrics but also the management team's networks, reputation, and stakeholder relationships. They should also monitor governance practices, since strong governance that emphasises transparency and accountability builds trust, which this study shows has a significant influence on performance.

In addition, investors ought to support strategic investments by encouraging management to commit resources to relationship-building activities, even when short-term returns are not immediately apparent.

6.3 | Limitations and future research

Several limitations warrant acknowledgement. First, the cross-sectional design, in which data were collected at a single point in time, constrains causal inference; longitudinal research would better establish causal relationships and dynamic processes. Second, the use of self-reported measures for both independent and dependent variables relies on management perceptions and may introduce common method bias, even though statistical tests indicated minimal common method variance. Third, the single-country context means that findings from Ghana may not generalise to banking systems operating under different institutional, regulatory, and cultural conditions. Fourth, omitted variables such as technological capabilities, market conditions, and regulatory changes, which are also likely to influence bank performance, were not fully captured in the analysis. Fifth, the unexpected negative or non-significant results for collaboration may reflect limitations in how collaboration was measured rather than the absence of genuine effects.

Future research should prioritise longitudinal studies that track the development of social capital and performance outcomes over time to establish causal mechanisms and identify lead-lag relationships. It should also incorporate multi-country comparisons to examine whether the effects of social capital vary across banking systems with distinct regulatory frameworks, competitive dynamics, and cultural contexts. In addition, researchers ought to investigate post-crisis dynamics by exploring how banking crises affect social capital accumulation and whether social capital accelerates post-crisis recovery.

This study provides robust evidence that top management team social capital, particularly network intensity and trust, significantly enhances bank performance in Ghana. While liquidity independently contributes to performance, it does not mediate the effects of social capital, suggesting multiple independent pathways to success. Management commitment emerges as a critical catalyst that unlocks the potential of social capital. For Ghana's banking sector, recovering from recent crises, these findings underscore the importance of rebuilding trust, strengthening management networks, and fostering committed leadership. Banks that strategically invest in relational resources alongside traditional financial resources will be better positioned to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success. The research contributes to both academic understanding and the practical management of banks in emerging markets, demonstrating that social capital is a valuable strategic resource deserving systematic attention from managers, regulators, and researchers alike.

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None reported.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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