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Linking Teacher Competences to Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: The role of empowerment

Introduction

Organizations that employ people who carry out roles that go beyond their job description outperform those that don't (Organ, 2006). As a result, some human resource studies are concerned with identifying ways that would promote employee exhibition of such organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ & Ryan 1995). The concept of organizational citizenship behaviors derives from the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory specifies longer term relationships that build high level trust and reciprocity (Homans, 1958) which in essence results into individuals exhibiting discretionary behaviours at their job.

Over the years, the concept of OCB has been explored from a number of dimensions with several scholars using OCB as a predictor, mediator and criterion variable. For example Low (2010) explored the effects of human resource management practices on service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors; while Wan (2011) studied the role of leader-member exchange in organizational justice - organizational citizenship behaviour relationships. All these studies have enriched the concept of OCB. Ye (2012) found positive and significant relationship between organizational values and organizational citizenship behaviors, whereas Ariani's (2012) study explored the relationship between social capital, organizational citizenship behaviours and individual employee performance in the Banking Industry in Indonesia. In another study, Runhaar, Konermann and Sanders (2013) investigated leader member exchange as a precursor to OCB. The three scholars explored the role of work engagement, autonomy and leader member exchanges on teacher OCB. All these studies have created a wealth of literature on the concept of OCB; however none of these studies has explored the relationship between competences and OCB with empowerment as a mediating factor.

In his study of public sector accountants in Uganda, Katarangi (2010) claims that the failure of managers to reward employees' behaviors by showing their satisfaction or appreciation to their employees who have performed well affects both OCB and performance. His study is key to the concept of operant competences because it identifies employee competences as seen from the point of view of bankers. However, Katarangi's study focuses on mere relationships between variables and fails to address the mediator effect of empowerment on the competence-OCB relationship, which is the gist of this study.

Practically, a team from the Ministry of Education and Sports commissioned to evaluate a five year period of implementation of the Universal Primary Education project in Uganda found that government had continuously ignored to link performance and extra role performance exhibited by teachers to teacher practices (ANPPCAN, 2010). Furthermore, subsequent interventions such as those initiated by the Education Standards Authority and those associated with Universal Primary Education policy have continued to ignore teacher work-based practices in the promotion of teacher extra role performance (ANPPCAN, 2010). For instance measures of quality education in Universal Primary Education and the Education Standards Agency have exclusively focused on material issues by using classroom construction, furniture and instructional materials as quality indicators while ignoring teacher practices that promote behaviours like conscientiousness, helping and sportsmanship (Kasekende, 2006). Ministry of education reports on school performance continue to show presence of playgrounds, national flags, student-toilet ratio etc... as quality indicators in universal primary education schools; still neglecting teacher practices in form extra-role behaviors (Ministry of Education and Sports Annual Report, 2010; 2013).

Naderi and Hoveida's (2013) study investigated the relationships that exist between human resources psychological empowerment factors such as meaning, self-determination, competence, impact) and OCB factors; altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue.

Their study treats competence as a dimension of psychological contract empowerment. But, in this study we investigate empowerment and competence as distinct concepts. Most importantly, while Naderi et al.'s study finds that human resources empowerment can bring positive OCB which is in agreement with earlier findings (e. g. Abazeed, 2010 & Yun, Cox and Salam, 2007), the current study is interested in the mediation effect of empowerment on the competence-OCB relationship. Drawing from the discussion above, there is evidence that the concepts of competences, empowerment and OCB have attracted much attention; however, there is no particular study that has investigated the mediation effect of empowerment on the competence-OCB relationship. This is what this study attempts to address.

Literature review and development of hypotheses

The section attempts to present a critical review of extant literature on the concepts of operant competences, empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB).

Operant competences and empowerment

The competence construct was popularised in management literature by researchers from McBer Company such as Boyatzis (1982). They defined the term to mean an underlying characteristic of a person resulting in "effective and /or superior performance in a job" (Boyatzis, 1982). Whereas scholars do not agree on the precise definition of competences, there appears to be broad consensus that it involves knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to perform a job competently (Sanghi, 2007). The study of competences is important because employees with high level competences are reported to have a higher level organizational commitment (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). But organizational commitment has been linked to empowerment, while also competence has been linked to commitment (Stoof, Martens, Van Merriënboer, and Bastiaens, 2002). However, practitioners and academicians who have examined competences have done so from the perspective of the objectivist tradition. The objectivist

perspective assumes that there is an objective number of competences which an organisation or a profession requires to meet its objectives and once this set has been identified then every unit in the organisation and profession works towards acquiring that set. However, Stoof et al. (2002) assert that a search for the one single true set of competences is hindering a creative use of the concept as efforts are geared towards finding and defending the one true set and its definition. This personal approach to competences in general, is tacit, complex and ambiguous. It obscures the relationship between input and output and raises the survival threshold of organisations such as schools in Africa. Stoof et al., (2002) propose instead, to embrace a constructivist view of competence which allows users of the concept to define competence from their own environment. In essence this calls for the use of operant competences. A study by Kagaari and Munene (2007) had identified engineering lecturers' competences to include planning, assessing and initiating. In her study, Namazzi (2011) found that only 1% of the variance in performance of secondary school teachers can be attributed to their competencies and organisational citizenship behaviours. On top of her puzzling finding (1% prediction), her study ignores the mediating role of teacher empowerment on the competence-OCB relationship. Her study also remains silent on what constitutes teacher competences. There was therefore necessity to pursue the concepts of competences and OCB with empowerment as a mediator.

To remove the ambiguity and to lower the survival threshold of organisations including schools in Africa, we propose to develop and utilize the operant competences that focus on the relationship between the external work environment and the individual teacher and relate them to teacher empowerment. We define an operant competence as a competence that directly influences the work environment and contains its own reinforcements.

Based on the works of Carasco, Munene, Kasente, and Odada (1996), planning (also called forethought) is the process of thinking about and organizing the activities required to achieve a desired goal. It involves

the creation and maintenance of a plan. Extant literature on planning as a dimension of operant competences (Kagaari & Munene, 2007) has linked this employee competence to commitment at vocational school level. We argue that planning as a teacher operant competence enables the individual to acquire skills that that help empower him/her.

On the other hand, continuous assessment is the educational policy in which students are examined constantly over most of the duration of their education, the results of which are taken into account after leaving school (The Improving Education Quality Research Core Team, 1999). It is often proposed or used as an alternative to a final examination system. There are several types of continuous assessment including daily class work, course related projects and papers, and practical work. One of the advantages of continuous assessment is that it looks at the full capabilities of a student. It also requires students to keep up with their studying as they go along. Gaining the continuous assessment skill is key to teacher commitment and performance (Kagari & Munene, 2007). But commitment has been linked to empowerment and competences to commitment, so we would assume that continuous assessment as dimension of operant competences could be linked to empowerment. However, this concept has not been examined in relation to employee empowerment and subsequently to teacher extra role behaviours. We hence hypothesize as follows:

Ho_{1a}: There is no relationship between planning as an employee operant competence and empowerment

Ho_{1b}: There is no relationship between continuous assessment as an employee operant competence and empowerment

The other concept that has been ignored in employee operant competences is initiating. There is a dearth of literature on the concept of initiation as a teacher competence. Available literature indicates that initiating is coming up with new ideas preferably prior to the act (Kagari & Munene, 2007). Initiating has been positively linked to commitment and managed performance by Kagaari and Munene (2007) in their

study of vocational school teachers. However, it has not been fully examined in relation to empowerment more so in other contexts. Accordingly we hypothesize as follows:

Ho_{1c}: There is no relationship between initiating as an employee operant competence and empowerment.

Empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour

Several studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and general performance. For example Rioux, Bernthal and Wellins (2000) argue that empowerment enables people to use their own judgement in the interest of the organization. Jim,et al. (2013) explored the concepts of leader member exchange (LMX), empowerment and competences on how these variables encourage the exhibition of OCB among the service personnel in the banking industry in Malaysia. For all the three predictors of OCB, Jim et al.'s (2013) study found positive and significant relationships. However, Jim et al.'s study did not test for mediation effects of empowerment on the competence-OCB relationship. Neither did the study explain in detail what constitutes competences. To Jim et al. (2013), competences were defined to consist of customer awareness, team work, commitment and contribution and productivity. In this study, we deviate from these earlier studies first, by defining operant competences from the point of view of the environment under which one is working. Second; by treating and testing empowerment as a mediator of the competence – OCB relationship.

Based on the social exchange theory individuals in the social exchange relationship tend to display more effective work behaviors (Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Settoon et al., 1996). What this means is that employees who feel empowered work more willingly (Andrews et al., 2008). Furthermore, Andrews et al. (2008) and Conger and Kanungo (1998) note that, management styles like empowerment of employees have been linked to increased force commitment, quality of work life and improved performance. Other studies have also linked performance to organizational citizenship behaviour (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). Since there appears to be a link between empowerment and performance, and

performance and organizational citizenship behaviour, naturally one would imagine that there is a link between empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour. We hence hypothesize as follows:

Ho₂: Employee empowerment is not related to organizational citizenship behaviors.

Operant competences, empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviors

The concept of competences remains an unsolved puzzle. Competences have been used both as a predictor variable and a mediator variable. For example, competence has been studied as a mediator of leadership styles and OCB (Lee & Salleh, 2011; Lee & Low, 2012) and found to a key route through which the inputs of leadership on OCB can be channeled. The two studies bring a very important contribution to the world of knowledge by linking leadership to OCB, leadership to competences and competences acting as a mediator of the leadership-OCB relationship. But the two studies did not tackle the concept of competences as a sole exogenous variable of OCB. Neither did the studies include the concept of empowerment. This study deviates from the two earlier studies by arguing that empowerment is not only predicted by competences but could also mediate the relationship between competences and OCB.

The probability for the positive relationship between empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour has been demonstrated time and again and summarized in narrative reviews above. Also as recently stated by Andrews et al., (2008), management styles like competence development among employees have been linked to increased force commitment, quality of work life and improved performance. But commitment has also been linked to both empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour creating abundant support for viewing employee empowerment as an influence on organizational citizenship behaviour. On the other hand, Senge (2000) has long argued that competences will be positively and directly related to

commitment which commitment is linked to empowerment. Furthermore, naturally one would expect that competences would correlate positively with organizational citizenship behaviour for reasons other than empowerment (e.g. because competences influences both organizational citizenship behaviour and empowerment). This then creates a link between competences and extra role behaviours. Such roles or behavior may go beyond those prescribed for given jobs which in turn produce quality outputs in terms of services or products. But, then such roles can be also achieved through having empowered employees. Based on these arguments, we hypothesize that:

Ho₃ Empowerment does not mediate the relationship between (Ho_{3a}) planning and organizational citizenship behaviors (Ho_{3b}) continuous assessment and organizational citizenship behaviors and; (Ho_{3c}) initiating and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Methodology

In this section we provide a detailed version of the methods used in the study. We present the research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure, control of common methods bias. We end with data collection instrument, measurement of variables, validity and reliability of the measurement items.

Research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive and analytical design examining operant competences, empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour for teachers in Kampala Uganda. The population consisted of teachers in private and public schools obtained from Head Teachers Association staff list and Kampala City Council respectively. In this survey we sought 95 per cent confidence level and computed a sample of size of 691 teachers based on sample size determination guidelines by Yamane (1973) out of which 383 (55.5% usable questionnaires were returned).

A two stage sampling procedure was used to identify the teachers to be studied. First, cluster sampling technique was adopted using the five political divisions of Kampala. Second, a simple random sampling technique using a table of random numbers was used to pick the required number of teachers from each division following alphabetical. The selection criterion was based on the length of the largest numbers on the population list. We selected digits in groups of two and three for the numbers that were in tens and hundreds respectively. Consistent with rules of sampling, we only selected cases from the list for the sample which corresponded with the identified number from the table. Using this process, we ignored all repeated numbers and numbers that were not on the population list. We continued this process until we obtained the required sample size of 619. The response rate for the survey was 55.4 percent. In this paper we present results derived from a sample of 383 usable questionnaires.

Control of Common Methods Bias

Basing on Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012), negatively stated questions acted as intellectual speed bumps and these were later reverse coded. Harman's one-factor test yielded 17 factors explaining 70.10 percent of the total variance (Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure 0.880) with the first factor explaining 20.19 per cent.

Data collection instrument, measurement of variables, validity and reliability

Data was collected in 2012. *Nonetheless, despite the data having been collected in 2012, this difference of two years (now 2014) may not have significantly changed the situation in terms of teacher perception of the study variables in Uganda.* In nomothetic or quantitative research (Sekaran, 2000; Creswell, 2006), it is believed that the reality of nature is out there. So the researcher used a pre-determined structured questionnaire to obtain the answers to the questionnaire items. The researcher employed the services of four assistants two with Masters Degree and two in their second year of Masters degree course. The researcher trained these four research assistants on the modalities of data collection. The research assistants worked with the contact person provided by the authorities in each school. The researcher briefed the contact

persons about the procedure of distributing and collecting the questionnaires. Both the researcher and the research assistants collected the filled-in questionnaires. Often both researcher and research assistants made telephone calls as reminders to the contact persons on when to collect the filled-in questionnaires.

In operationalising operant competences, item measures developed by Partners in Learning and Action (PILA), 2003 were adopted. This tool had been tested for validity and reliability and used in earlier studies in similar settings, and it has no middle point because in measuring competence, one either has the competence or he/she doesn't. Empowerment items were adapted from Kanungo (1998). Respondents indicated their opinions on items such as "I am enthusiastic about working towards the organization's objectives". The variable OCB was measured using a tool by Organ (1988). Respondents indicated their opinions on items such as "I assist superior with his/her work". All questionnaire items were anchored on a four-point likert scale with "1" as strongly agree, "2" as agree, "3" as disagree and "4" as strongly disagree. This study employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Analysis of Moment Structures for statistical analysis. According to Babin and Svensson (2012), the most commonly used metric measure in measurement models of structural equation modelling in social sciences research is Likert-scales (Likert, 1932). This metric measure tends to be based upon four or five - or seven-point scale, where the anchor points are interpreted to represent the metric measures "from 1 to 4" or "from 1 to 5" or from 1 to 7" (Babin & Svensson, 2012). This metric measure operationalise constructs in the measurement model of structural equation modelling and influences theory testing and forthcoming replications (Babin & Svensson, 2012). Although a 7-point Likert-scale prevents people from being too neutral in their responses, Colman, Norris and Preston (1997) using a fully invertible method of estimating 7-point from 5-point and 5-point from 7-point ratings found negligible loss of accuracy. Their results imply that researchers

should be indifferent in the use of either a four point or five-point or a seven-point Likert scale. Based on the arguments above a 7-point scale could as well yield similar results as the 4-point likert scale. This study employed a four-point likert-scale to get higher response rate because the study was a survey to measure teachers' perceptions.

Consistent with Nunnally (1978), Chronbach alpha coefficients for all study variables were above 0.7. Factor analysis for teacher competences yielded three factors namely planning; continuous assessment and initiating with acceptable Chronbach alpha coefficients. The mean scores reveal that all the variables of study were highly rated by teachers in public schools and private schools (see Table 2).

Table 1 about here

Basing on Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Medsker et al., (1994), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted the results reveal acceptable model fit (see fig. 1). This is consistent with the works of Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003), and other scholars like Nkundabanyanga et al. (2014) and Ntayi et al. (2013), who have published based on similar cutoff points. Analysis retained initiating, continuous assessment and planning for teacher operant competences and one factor (conscientiousness) for organizational citizenship behavior.

The convergent validity was assessed by examining factor loadings and they were found to be significant at the .001 alpha levels (Table 1). The observed factor loadings compared with their standard errors revealed evidence of an association between planning, continuous assessment, initiating, empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour. This was so because each of the factor loadings is above the minimum acceptable cutoff of 0.5 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 2006). According to

figure 1, the lowest factor loading is 0.59 while the highest is 0.88. These values inform the squared multiple correlations (R^2) - which values represent the extent to which a measured variable's variance is explained by a latent factor (Hair et al., 2006). The R^2 (Squared Multiple Correlations) corresponding to each of the thirteen observed variables indicates that the respective factors (planning, initiating, continuous assessment, empowerment and OCB) explain respectable portions of the variance in each of the items/observed variables. Discriminant validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which should be above 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and AVE was found to be acceptable (see fig. 1 and table 2). Fornell and Larcker (1981) say that, for discriminant validity to hold; AVE by the correlated latent variables should be greater than the square of the correlation between these latent variables and our results attest to this guideline.

Table 2 about here

Two major purposes guided the researcher's effort to carry out confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (see figure 1) and eventually structural equation modelling (SEM) (see figure 2). Using Analysis of MOment structures (AMOS version 18), CFA was carried out to either confirm or reject the researcher's pre-conceived theory on the items that measure the study variables (Hair et al., 2006). In other words, for the researcher to continue to carry out statistical tests with precision, the researcher needed to confirm that the items that we used to measure the constructs of study as depicted from the questionnaire were actually the real ones. Second, the researcher carried out SEM to establish model fit. This eventually helped the researcher to test the objectives and hypotheses (Hair et al., 2006). The measurement and structural models were

estimated sequentially to reduce interpretational confounding and to limit complexity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Figure 1 about here

This model was constructed following guidelines by Anderson and Gerbing (1998) and Hair et al. (2006) on competing models. The scholars advocate for 2-step process, that is, (1) establishing measurement model of each variable under study through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (see figure 1) and (2) establishing model fit by creating a structural equation model (SEM) (see figure 2) showing relationships between the variables depending on theoretical foundation. Below is the mediated structural equation model.

Figure 2 about here

Results

The age group was concentrated between early and middle adulthood: 43.3 percent were aged between 25-35 years. 48.8 per cent were male and 51.2 per cent were female. 47.8 percent of the respondents had a diploma in education; hence were educated enough to comprehend the questionnaire.

Table 3 about here

Following Morgan and Hunt's (1994) four criteria for testing different SEM model comparisons: (1) overall model fit as measured by CFI; (2) percentage of hypothesized significant paths; (3) amount of variance explained as measured by squared multiple correlations; and (4) parsimony assessed by the

parsimonious normed fit index (NFI); it was found that the mediated model did better on all the four fronts (see Table 3). Based on results in table, comparison between the two competing models on these four criteria indicated that in terms of percentage of hypothesized significant paths, the mediated model did better that is 100% (4 out of 4 hypotheses tested were significant) than the non mediated model, that is 33.3% (1 of the 3 hypotheses were significant). Secondly, the mediated model had better CFI and NFI fit indices than the non-mediated (i.e. 1.00 and 0.99 as opposed to 0.52 and 0.52 respectively). Lastly, for the amount of variance explained by the model, the mediated model's squared multiple correlations (SMC) of 0.12 was a better representation of the data than the non-mediated model's SMC of 0.00; meaning that the mediated model explained 12% of the variance in OCB as compared to the 0% of the non mediated model. Based on these criteria, it was asserted that the mediated model was a more accurate and useful depiction of the relationships among the constructs. SEM provides a table of total effects, direct effects and indirect effects. We extracted these tables to help in order to test the hypotheses and be able to interpret the findings (see Table 4).

Table 4 about here

Planning is significantly and positively related to empowerment (Table 3); implying that when planning improves by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too improves by 0.37 standard deviations. These findings lend support to H_{1a} . Results also show that continuous assessment was found to be positively associated with empowerment (Tables 3); implying that when continuous assessment goes up by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too goes up by 0.16 standard deviations. This finding lends support to H_{1b} . Results also established a positive and significant association between initiating and empowerment (Tables 3); implying that when initiating goes up by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too goes up by 0.14 standard deviations. These findings lend support to H_{1c} . From the results in Table 3, empowerment is significantly and positively related to organizational citizenship behavior; implying that when initiating goes up by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too goes up by 0.35 standard deviations. These findings lend support to H_2 .

Results revealed a mediation effect of empowerment on the relationship between planning and organizational citizenship behaviour (see Table 4) hence supporting H_{3a} . Since the direct effect is nonexistent, then we assume total mediation. Also results indicate that a mediation effect exists of empowerment on the relationship between continuous assessment and organizational citizenship behaviour (see Table 4) lending support for H_{3b} . Since the indirect effect totally wipes out the direct effect and is significant, then we assume total mediation. Lastly, results established a mediation effect empowerment on the relationship between initiating and organizational citizenship behavior; hence supporting H_{3c} (Table 4). Since the direct effect is nonexistent, then we assume total mediation.

Discussion, implications, conclusion, limitations and implications for future research

This section presents a detailed discussion of the results, theoretical and managerial implications, conclusion, a few limitations and suggestions for future research.

Discussion

Findings reveal a positive and significant association between planning and empowerment among teachers in the public service. This shows that changes introduced in planning may be related to changes in empowerment that may occur. Schools can therefore enhance employee empowerment by introducing practices and policies that cater for the employee ability to plan their work based on the environment where they are performing their duties. When teachers identify the necessary requirements for the activities in the week, say in terms of teaching materials, establish pupil non verbal communication and design instructional materials/visual aids that are within their reach but remain relevant to the study material, then they will develop the competence required to do their job based on the prevailing work environment. Also, practices like teacher identification of students to be involved in each group of activities assists them develop the competencies to work effectively.

The study findings revealed a positive and significant association between continuous assessment and empowerment. This means that changes introduced in continuous assessment may be related to changes

in empowerment that may occur among teachers. Most primary school continuous assessment is in name but not in practice. Usually examinations are given at the end of the term and these do not constitute part of the pupils' final assessment at the end of the year or school primary school period. Instead a general Primary Leaving Examination is set by Uganda National Examinations Board. Teachers hence find no meaning in this exercise. This study demonstrates that once teachers acquire the ability to continuously assess their pupils, they will gain in terms of empowerment. The schools therefore enhance employee empowerment by introducing changes that cater for teacher acquisition of ability to assess their students on a continuous basis. Practices like evaluating students' performance for each assignment done and recording such students' marks on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and then use such results for future decision making on the pupil, instead of only once at the end of the school term, will enable the teacher to feel that he/she can influence the way work is done in the school or that he is fulfilling one of the important responsibilities of his job. What this means is that when these records are properly maintained, the teacher's capability, skills and ability to do the job will be enhanced. This finding is synonymous with Kagaari et al.'s (2007) which linked continuous assessment to managed performance.

Findings also revealed a positive and significant association between initiating and empowerment. This finding implies that changes introduced in initiating new ideas may be associated with changes in empowerment that may occur among teachers. Schools can rely on enhancing employee empowerment by introducing small changes that promote teacher ability to initiate or innovate at the workplace. New ideas like involving students in discussion groups rather than conventional teaching; setting appropriate regulations for the discussion will enhance teacher ability to do the job. An initiative like inviting resource persons to teach specific topics – say a policeman to teach traffic laws, instead of the usual classroom teaching by the permanent teacher will reflect teacher capability to perform their work with minimum supervision.

The study findings further revealed a positive and significant association between empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior meaning that changes introduced in empowerment may be related to changes in organizational citizenship behavior that occur among teachers . This implies that schools can enhance organizational citizenship behavior by introducing changes that empower their staff. Therefore, when teachers develop the capability to do their job, then they could be expected to be in position to do more than what is expected of them, a sign of discretionary behaviors. When teachers are inspired by the goals of the organisation or department, by what the organization is trying to achieve or when they have lots of control over the work they do, then they are likely to seek and accept responsibility at all times or perform completely under no pressure.

The researcher proposed and examined the mediating role of empowerment on the relationship between operant competences and OCB among teachers in primary schools in Uganda. Indeed results show that the role of competences is significant in predicting OCB in primary schools through empowerment. This significant finding lends support for H_{3a} , H_{3b} and H_{3c} which states that there is a mediating effect of empowerment on the relationship between operant competences factors and OCB. Therefore, competences may influence OCB through empowerment in primary schools in Uganda. This implies that empowerment is critical to building competences for OCB in primary schools.

These study findings indicate that for all the three hypotheses, the predictor variables lost all their predictive power on the criterion variable, implying a full mediation effect exists of empowerment on the competences factors - OCB relationship. In view of these finding therefore,

it is strongly argued that schools need to create variations in competences on the reliance of empowerment in order to improve OCB. This creation of empowerment should be built on the appreciation of the differing operant competences such as planning, continuous assessment and innovation that impact OCB. This research's findings therefore posit that empowerment takes the inputs from operant competences and translates them into OCB; meaning that the process of empowerment translates operant competences into actual OCBs. In this study the researcher argues that for operant competences to have an effect on OCB, you need empowerment so that operant competences become more effective in predicting OCB. If schools engage into operant competences, then empowerment will strengthen the bond between teachers and school administrators which could result into employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours. This study demonstrates that schools can enhance the predictive power or contribution of operant competences towards OCB by introducing empowerment.

These findings enrich social exchange theory by confirming that appreciation of operant competences is a key antecedent of OCB. Also, although researchers have now and again investigated the link between operant competences and several performance indicators, this study is one of the pioneers to integrate operant competences with the literature on OCB by demonstrating the salient mediating role of empowerment. The findings are valuable because the research demonstrates that the presence of empowerment helps to extend the positive effects operant competences have on OCB. From the debate above, it has become apparent that operant competences are essential in as far as the exhibition of empowerment is concerned. Also, we note that the teacher empowerment so exhibited in schools appear to lead to OCB. So, we can as

well conclude that empowerment mediates the relationship of building OCB where administrators in schools can use operant competences to cause empowerment which ultimately leads to OCB. This conclusion is in consonance with the causal chain of mediation where the changes in the exogenous variable (operant competences) lead to changes in the mediating variable (empowerment); which mediator carries the effect of operant competences to the endogenous variable (OCB). Conclusively, we have to learn that in order for operant competences to influence the level of OCB in Uganda's schools, there is need for empowerment as a full mediator.

Theoretical implications

The study has contributed to the enduring operant competence debate in the field of education. This study has ascertained that teacher operant competence is a multi-dimensional predictor encompassing planning, initiating and continuous assessment. The study has therefore brought to light the true composition of operant competences in Ugandan public and private school education sector. Also, our findings reconceptualize the concept of competences from the perspective of the objectivist tradition (Heinsman, de Hoogh, Koopman, & van Muijen, 2007) to the constructivist view of competence. By confirming that planning, initiating and continuous assessment are true dimensions of teacher competences, this study contributes to the notion that the concept of competence should be defined from the employees' own environment. Jim et al. (2013) found competences to consist customer awareness, team work, commitment and contribution and productivity. Namazzi (2011) categorises them as knowledge, skills and abilities the teachers have, while Gooler (2002) points out that some of the operant competences, which teachers need to utilize for them to perform their tasks effectively include teaching preparation and procedures,

classroom management, knowledge of subject matter, personal characteristics and professional honor. Indeed this study promotes the concept that there is no one single true set of competences.

Methodological implications

The study adds to existing methods of data collection by introducing operant competence profiling as a method of identifying employee key result areas at their job so that we can easily pick up what is or is not a measure of teacher competences.

Managerial implications

Practically, given the significance of empowerment, heads of schools have to ensure the set up and implementation of human resources policies and practices that are favorable to building empowerment. For example, the heads of schools can pass on clear messages to employees that the school genuinely appreciates their operant competences and is accountable to them. Conversely, schools may increase heads of schools' control of rewards so that they can immediately support employees by providing them with valued training that increases their operant competences. To promote the perceptions of employees' operant competences in a school setting, school heads are encouraged to closely adhere to planning, initiating and continuous assessment rules. Also, school heads can be provided with planning, initiating and continuous assessment training to understand better the competences (e.g. planning vs initiating) so that they may carefully enact appropriate operant competence policies and regulations. In addition, the promotion of school heads can be linked to whether they can successfully implement operant competence based rules on the employees.

Conclusion

The study examined the mediating effect of empowerment on the relationship between operant competences and OCB. First of all, the findings of this study reveal some lessons that contribute to the debate of operant competences and endogenous variables such as empowerment and OCB.

One major lesson is that without empowerment, Ugandan primary schools may not enable their teachers to exhibit discretionary behaviours. The study has proved that appreciation of operant competences is important for both teacher empowerment and OCB in primary schools in Uganda. This implies that appreciation of operant competences enables parties to socially exchange through teacher exhibition of OCBs. Another lesson is that operant competences can be studied as an antecedent for mediators such as empowerment and criterion variables such as OCB. Overall empowerment has a substantial mediation influence on OCB compared to the direct influence operant competences have. Hence, the study recognizes the power of empowerment in the association between operant competences as an antecedent and OCB as a criterion variable. The recognition of empowerment is based on the fact that empowerment contributes a sizable percentage of the variance explained in OCB as compared to operant competences.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

First, being cross sectional in design, inferences cannot be drawn regarding causality among the variables. Also, results may limit the generalisability of our findings to other cultural contexts and occupations. We propose that in future a study based on a longitudinal design may be carried out to address the above limitations.

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

OPERANT COMPETENCES

Planning

In this school:

- i. prepares worked examples
- ii. establishes pupil non verbal communication
- iii. prepares a lesson plan
- iv. prepares a scheme of work
- v. designs instructional materials/visual aids
- vi. identifies teaching methods to be used
- vii. estimates content per lesson
- viii. distributes instructional materials to help pupils etc...

Continuous assessment

In this school:

- i. sets regulations for pupil discussion
- ii. prepares TOPICAL tests
- iii. assists pupils in revising
- iv. provides reference books for each topic
- v. examines pupils from all angles of the topic
- vi. administers tests/assignments
- vii. sets deadlines for receiving assignment/handing in answer sheets etc...

Initiation

In this school:

- i. involves students in discussion groups
- ii. sets appropriate regulations for discussion
- iii. organises meetings to be held in the school during the week
- iv. orients new teachers and pupils into the school
- v. makes requisitions for the logistics needed in preparation and implementation
- vi. determines materials to use
- vii. invites the right people to teach a specific topic
- viii. writes letters to invite the resource people and pupils from other schools
- ix. directs and facilitates class discussions etc...

EMPOWEREMENT

1. I can influence the way work is done in my department
2. I can influence decision taken in my department
3. I have authority to make decisions at work
4. I have the authority to work effectively
5. I am enthusiastic about the contribution of my work mates to the organisation
6. I am inspired by the goals of the organisation department
7. I am inspired by what we are trying to achieve as an organisation on emergencies
8. I am enthusiastic about working towards the organisation's objectives
9. I have lots of control over my work
10. If I need help, it is usually easy to get others to help
11. I am sure of what others expect of me in my working situation
12. My innovative idea belong to myself because they would be ignored anyway(R)
13. The simplest decision must always be checked before I go ahead (R) etc...

OCB

In this school:

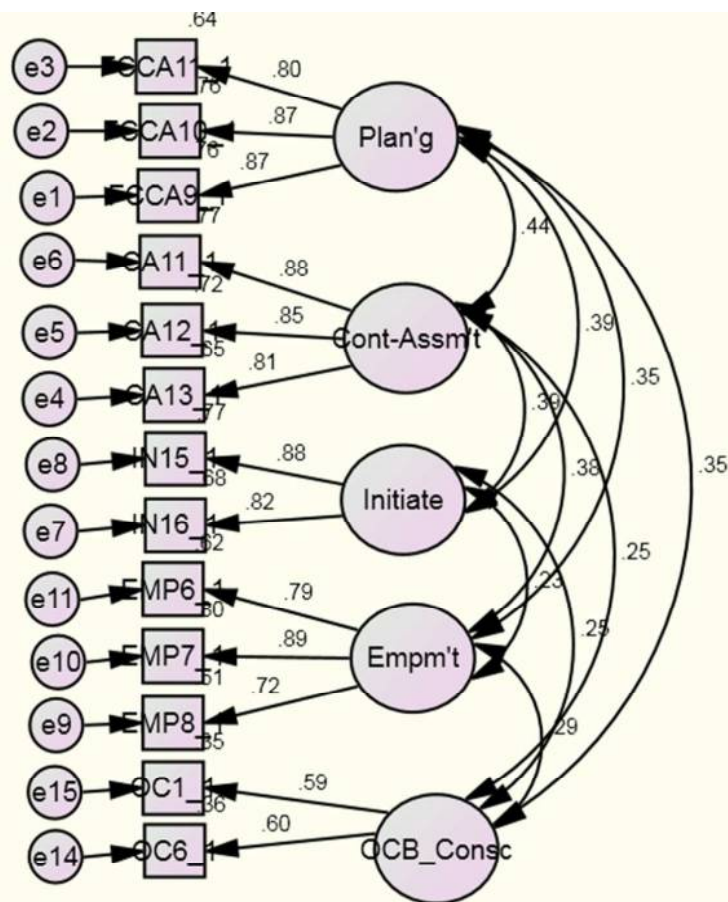
- i. seeks and accepts responsibility at all times
- ii. performs completely under pressure (R)
- iii. gets a great deal done within a set time frame
- iv. readily accepts more work
- v. could be expected to be in position to start at the appointed time
- vi. is concerned with standard of performance
- vii. is willing to work extra hours without being rewarded
- viii. spends a great deal of time in personal conversations (R) etc...

Table 1: Zero – order correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Planning	1.78	.62	.89				
2.Cont ass	1.45	.49	.40***	.94			
3.Initiating	1.98	.73	.33***	.34***	.92		
4.Empowerment	1.68	.41	.48***	.35***	.32***	.92	
5.OCBConsc	2.07	.68	.24***	.18***	.17***	.35***	.93

Table 2: Discriminant validity

Correlated latent variables	AVE estimates by the correlated latent variables	Square of the correlation between these latent variables
Planning and empowerment	0.68	0.12
Initiating and empowerment	0.68	0.05
Assessment and empowerment	0.68	0.15
Empowerment and OCB-conscientiousness	0.53	0.08

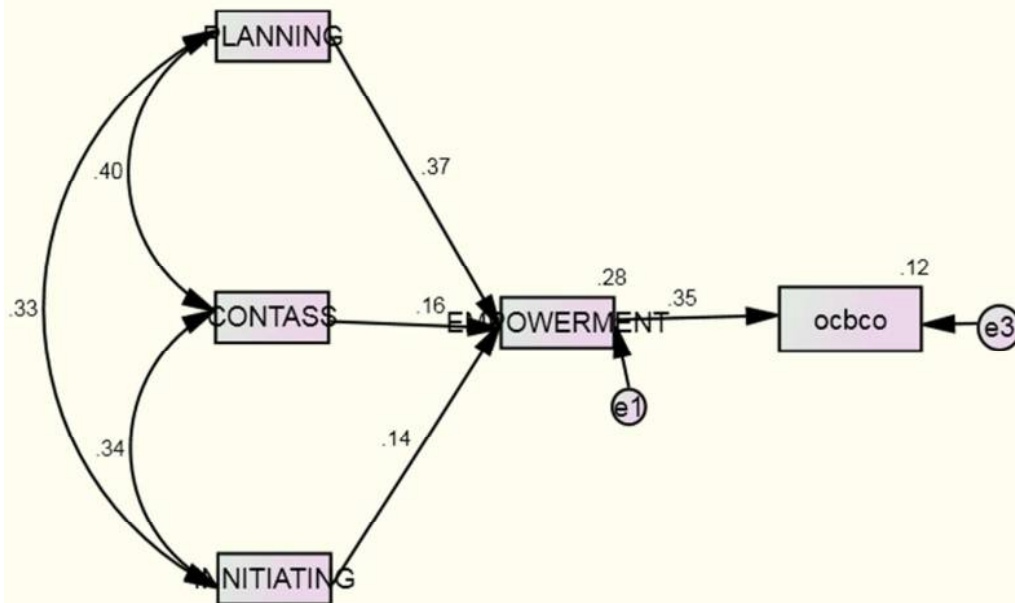


Chi-square(CMIN)=66.906; Degrees of freedom (df)=55;
 Probability (p)=0.130; Goodness of fit index (GFI)=0.973;
 Adjusted goodness of fit index; (AGFI)=0.956; Normed fit index
 (NFI)=0.972; Tucker Lewis index (TLI)=0.993; Comparative
 fit index (CFI)=0.998; Root mean square error of approximation
 (RMSEA)=0.024; AVE=0.624

Plan'g=Planning
 Cont-Assm't= Continuous assessment
 Initiate: Initiating
 Empm't= Empowerment
 OCB_Consc= Organizational citizenship behaviour (conscientiousness)

Fig1: The r/ship between operant competences, empowerment & OCB

Fig2: Mediated model of teacher competences, empowerment & OCB



Chi-square(CMIN)=4.222; Degrees of freedom (df)=3; Probability (p)=0.238;
 Ratio of chi-square-degrees of freedom (CMIN/df)=1.407;
 Goodness of fit index (GFI) =0.996; Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)=0.978; Normed fit index (NFI)=0.986;
 Tucker lewis index (TLI)=0.986; Comparative fit index (CFI)=0.996;
 Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.033

PLANNING: a dimension of teacher operant competences
 CONTASS: Continuous assessment as a dimension of teacher operant competences
 INITIATING: a dimension of teacher operant competences
 EMPOWERMENT: a mediating variable
 ocbco: Conscientiousness as a dimension of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 3: Comparison of competing models

		None mediated Model	Mediated Model
Empowerment	<--- Planning		.37***
Empowerment	<--- Initiating		.14**
Empowerment	<--- Cont Assm't		.16***
ocbco	<--- Empowerment		.35***
ocbco	<--- Planning	.18***	
ocbco	<--- Initiating	.08	
ocbco	<--- Cont Assm't	.08	
X ²		149.21	4.22
Df		4	3
P		0.00	0.24
CFI		0.52	1.00
NFI		0.52	0.99
RMSEA		0.31	0.03
SMC for empowerment		0.07	.28
SMC for OCBCConsc		0.00	.12

Table 4: Effects table

	Total effects				Direct effects				Indirect effects			
	CA	In	Plan	Emp	CA	In	Plan	Emp	CA	In	Plan	Emp
Empowerment	.16	.14	.37	.00	.16	.14	.37	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
OCBCO	.05	.05	.13	.35	.00	.00	.00	.35	.05	.05	.13	.00