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Linking teacher competences to organizational citizenship behaviour
The role of empowerment

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine relationship between teacher competences and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) with empowerment as a mediating factor.

Design/methodology/approach – The study took a cross-sectional descriptive and analytical design. Using cluster and random sampling procedures, data were obtained from 383 usable questionnaires. Data were analyzed through SPSS and Analysis of Moment Structures.

Findings – Results indicated that planning, continuous assessment and initiating as operant teacher competences were significantly and positively related to empowerment. Also, empowerment was significantly and positively related to OCBs. Similarly, empowerment came out as a full mediator of the relationship between the teacher competences and OCBs.

Practical implications – The study is relevant in that heads of schools will ensure they set up and implement human resources policies and practices that are favorable to building empowerment and OCB. School heads will be able to closely adhere to planning, initiating and continuous assessment rules in order to promote teacher empowerment and OCB. Government could appraise school heads based on whether they can successfully implement operant competence related rules on the employees

Originality/value – The findings theoretically reconceptualize competences from the objectivist to the constructivist perspective. Planning, initiating, continuous assessment and empowerment make significant variations in OCB. The study demonstrates that empowerment translates the inputs of teacher competence into OCB.

Keywords Teachers, Assessment, Empowerment, Planning, Initiating, Organizational citizenship behaviour

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizations that employ people who carry out roles that go beyond their job description outperform those that do not (Organ *et al.*, 2006). As a result, some human resource studies are concerned with identifying ways that would promote employee exhibition of such organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Organ and Ryan, 1995). The concept of OCBs 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 behaviors 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 OCBs; while Wan (2011) studied the role of leader-member exchange in organizational justice – OCB relationships. All these studies have enriched the concept of OCB. Ye (2012) found positive and significant relationships between organizational values and organizational citizenship behaviors, whereas Ariani's (2012) study explored the relationship between social capital, organizational citizenship behaviors and individual employee performance in the banking industry in Indonesia. In another study, Runhaar *et al.* (2013) investigated leader-member exchange (LMX) as a precursor to OCB. The three scholars explored the role of work engagement, autonomy and LMXs 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 focusses 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 focussed on material issues by using classroom construction, furniture and instructional materials as quality indicators while ignoring teacher practices that promote behaviors 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, 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 *et al.*, 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 OCB.

Operant competences and empowerment
The competence construct was popularized 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 and Spector, 2001). But organizational commitment has been linked to empowerment, while also competence has been linked to commitment (Stoof *et al.*, 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 organization or a profession requires to meet its objectives and once this set has been identified then every unit in the organization and profession works toward 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 toward 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 organizations 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 percent of the variance in performance of secondary school teachers can be attributed to their competencies and organizational citizenship behaviors. On top of her puzzling finding (1 percent 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 organizations 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 *et al.* (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 and 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 (Uganda National Examinations Board, 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 (Kagaari and 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 behaviors. We hence hypothesize as follows:

H1a. There is no relationship between planning as an employee operant competence and empowerment.

H1b. 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 (Kagaari and 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:

H1c. There is no relationship between initiating as an employee operant competence and empowerment.

Empowerment and OCB
Several studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and general performance. For example Rioux *et al.* (2000) argue that empowerment enables people to use their own judgment in the interest of the organization. Jim *et al.* (2013) explored the concepts of 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 and 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 OCB (Organ *et al.*, 2006). Since there appears to be a link between empowerment and performance, and performance and OCB, naturally one would imagine that there is a link between empowerment and OCB. We hence hypothesize as follows:

H2. Employee empowerment is not related to OCBs.

Operant competences, empowerment and OCBs

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 and Salleh, 2011; Lee and 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 OCB 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 OCB creating abundant support for viewing employee empowerment as an influence on OCB. On the other hand, Senge *et al.* (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 OCB for reasons other than empowerment (e.g. because competences influences both OCB and empowerment). This then creates a link between competences and extra-role behaviors. 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:

H3. Empowerment does not mediate the relationship between (a) planning and OCBs (b) continuous assessment and OCBs and; (c) initiating and OCBs.

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 OCB 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 percent 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 percent usable questionnaires were retuned).

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 *et al.* (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 percent.

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 master's degree and two in their second year of master's 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 operationalizing 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 does not. Empowerment items were adapted from Kanungo and Misra (1992). 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 Modeling (SEM) with Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) for statistical analysis. According to Babin and Svensson (2012), the most commonly used metric measure in measurement models of SEM 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 and Svensson, 2012). This metric measure operationalize constructs in the measurement model of SEM and influences theory testing and forthcoming replications (Babin and Svensson, 2012). Although a seven-point Likert-scale prevents people from being too neutral in their responses, Colman *et al.* (1997) using a fully invertible method of estimating seven-point from five-point and five-point from seven-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 seven-point scale could as well yield similar results as the four-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), Cronbach's α 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 Cronbach's α coefficients. The mean scores reveal that all the variables of study were highly rated by teachers in public schools and private schools (see Table II).

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 Figure 1). This is consistent with the works of Schermeller-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 OCB.

The convergent validity was assessed by examining factor loadings and they were found to be significant at the 0.001 α levels (Table I). The observed factor loadings compared with their standard errors revealed evidence of an association between planning, continuous assessment, initiating, empowerment and OCB. This was so because each of the factor loadings is above the minimum acceptable cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). According to Figure 1, the lowest factor loading is 0.59 while the highest is 088. These values inform the squared multiple correlations (SMCs; 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 (SMCs) corresponding to each of the 13 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 and Larcker, 1981) and AVE was found to be acceptable (see Figure 1 and Table II). 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.
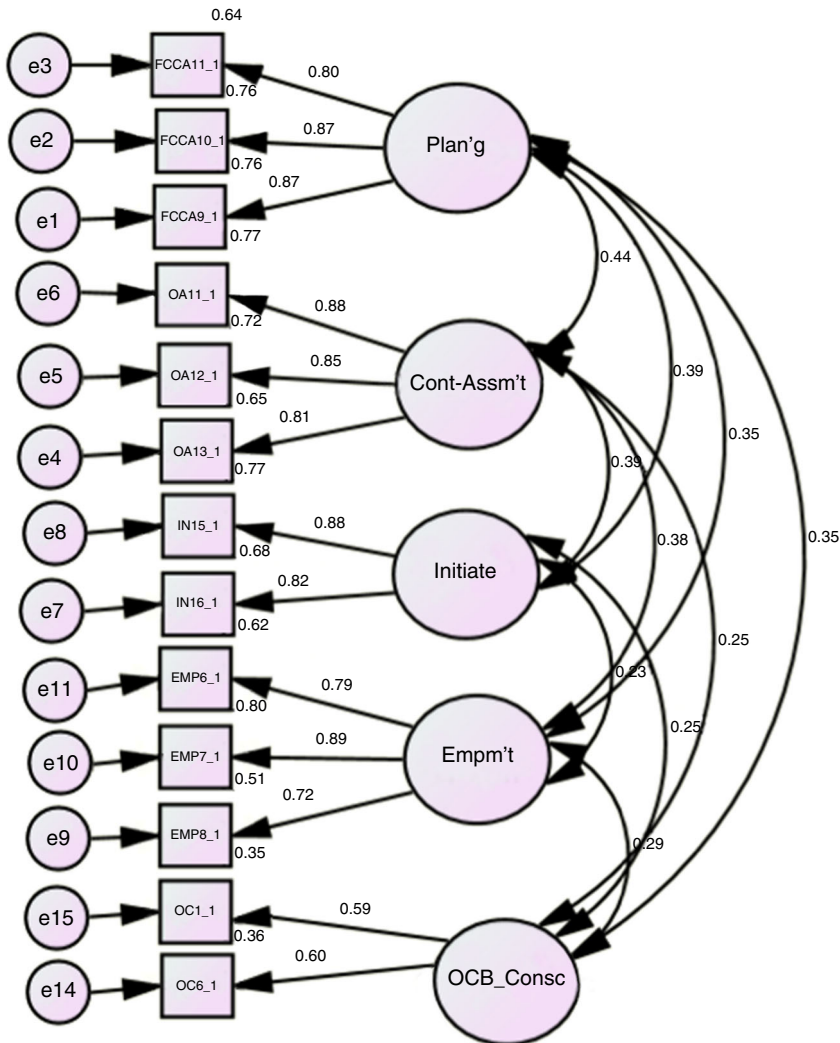
Notes: χ^2(CMIN)=66.906; degreees of freedom (df)=55; probability (*p*)=0.130;
goodness of fit index (GFI)=0.973; adjusted goodness of fit intex; (AGFI)=0.956;
normed fit index (NFI)=0.972; Tucker Lewis index (TLI)=0.993; comparative fit
index (CFI)=0.998; root mean square error of appproximation (RMSEA)=0.024;
AVE=0.624. Plan'g, Planning; Cont-Assm't, Continuous assessment; Initiate,
Initiating; Emp't, Empowerment; OCB_Consc, Organizational citineship behaviour
(conscientiousness)

Figure 1.
The relation/ship
between operant
competences,
empowerment
and OCB

Two major purposes guided the researcher's effort to carry out CFA (see Figure 1) and
eventually SEM (see Figure 2). Using 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 and Gerbing, 1988).

This model was constructed following guidelines by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Hair *et al.* (2006) on competing models. The scholars advocate for two-step process, that is, first, establishing measurement model of each variable under study through CFA (see Figure 1) and second, 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.

Results

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

Following Morgan and Hunt's (1994) four criteria for testing different SEM model comparisons: overall model fit as measured by CFI; percentage of hypothesized significant paths; amount of variance explained as measured by SMCs; and 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 III). 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 percent (four out of four hypotheses tested were significant) than the non-mediated model, that is 33.3 percent (one of the three hypotheses were significant). Second, 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

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Planning	1.78	0.62	*0.89*				
2. Cont. assm't	1.45	0.49	0.40***	*0.94*			
3. Initiating	1.98	0.73	0.33***	0.34***	*0.92*		
4. Empowerment	1.68	0.41	0.48***	0.35***	0.32***	*0.92*	
5. OCB-consc.	2.07	0.68	0.24***	0.18***	0.17***	0.35***	*0.93*

Table I.
Zero-order correlations

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

Table II.
Discriminant validity
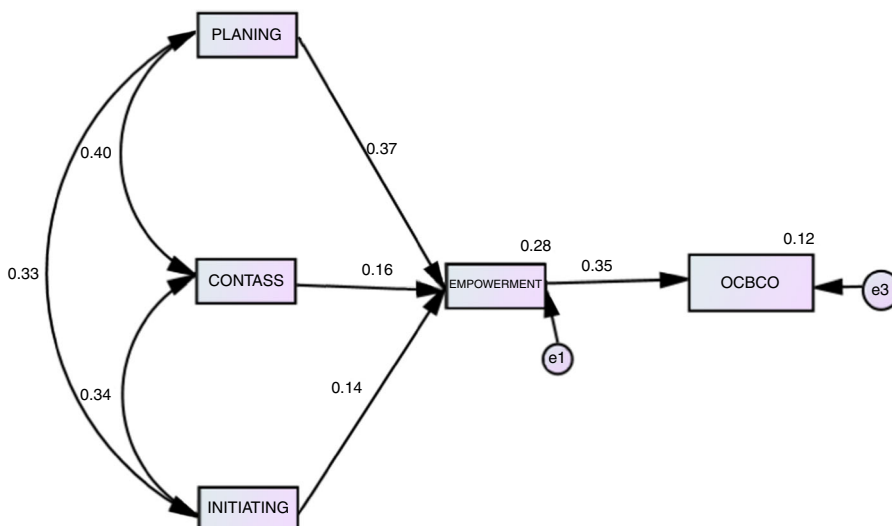
Notes: χ^2(CMIN)=4.222; degreees of freedom (df)=3; probability (p)=0.238; ratio of χ^2-degrees of freedom (CMIN/df)=1.407; goodness of fit index (GFI)=0.996; adjusted goodness of fit index; (AGFI)=0.978; normed fit index (NFI)=0.986; Tucker Lewis index (TLI)=0.986; comparative fit index (CFI)=0.996; root mean square error of appproximation (RMSEA)=0.033. PLANNING, a dimension of teacher operatant competences; CONTASS, Continuous assessment as a dmension of teacher operant competences; INITIATING, a dimension of teacher operant competences; EMPOWERMENT, a mediating variable; OCBCO, Concientiuousness as a dimension of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Figure 2.
Mediated model of
teacher competences,
empowerment
and OCB

	None mediated model	Mediated model
Empowerment←planning		0.37***
Empowerment←initiating		0.14**
Empowerment←cont. assm't		0.16***
OCBCO←empowerment		0.35***
OCBCO←planning	0.18***	
OCBCO←initiating	0.08	
OCBCO←cont. assm't	0.08	
χ^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	0.28
SMC for OCB-consc.	0.00	0.12

Table III.
Comparison of
competing models

variance explained by the model, the mediated model's SMCs 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 percent of the variance in OCB as compared to the 0 percent 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 IV).

Planning is significantly and positively related to empowerment (Table III); implying that when planning improves by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too improves by 0.37 standard deviations. These findings lend support to *H1a*. Results also show that continuous assessment was found to be positively associated with empowerment (Tables III); 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 *H1b*. Results also established a positive and significant association between initiating and empowerment Tables III); implying that when initiating goes up by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too goes up by 0.14 standard deviations. These findings lend support to *H1c*. From the results in Table III, empowerment is significantly and positively related to OCB; implying that when initiating goes up by 1 standard deviation, empowerment too goes up by 0.35 standard deviations. These findings lend support to *H2*. Results revealed a mediation effect of empowerment on the relationship between planning and OCB (see Table IV) hence supporting *H3a*. 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 OCB (see Table IV) lending support for *H3b*. 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 OCB; hence supporting *H3c* (Table IV). 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

	Total effects				Direct effects				Indirect effects			
	CA	In	Plan	Emp	CA	In	Plan	Emp	CA	In	Plan	Emp
Empowerment	0.16	0.14	0.37	0.00	0.16	0.14	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OCBCO	0.05	0.05	0.13	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.05	0.05	0.13	0.00

Table IV.
Effects table

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 and Munene (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 OCB meaning that changes introduced in empowerment may be related to changes in OCB that occur among teachers. This implies that schools can enhance OCB 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 organization 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 *H3a*, *H3b* and *H3c* 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 behaviors. This study demonstrates that schools can enhance the predictive power or contribution of operant competences toward 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 *et al.*, 2006) 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) categorizes 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 behaviors. 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 generalizability 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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Further reading

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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.

Empowerment:

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.

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