

**Teacher Operant Competences and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in the
Performance of Ugandan Primary Schools**

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Abstract

The study set out to identify a set of functional or operant competences relevant to primary school teaching in Uganda. It was prompted by a need to search for valid teacher practices that can be used as an input in designing an output oriented job description and setting clear performance targets for primary school teachers in the Country. We interviewed ten key teacher informants to generate a set of competence areas referred to as Key Results Areas where each teacher teaching in primary schools must get results. These KRAs were administered in a questionnaire format to three hundred and eighty four primary school teachers and their supervisors who also rated each respondent on a measure of organisational citizenship behaviour. An explanatory factor analysis returned eight interpretable factors which were used as indices for further analysis. A bivariate correlation produced positive correlation between OCB and some of the factors. A multiple regression indicated that operant competences and OCB can predict 25% of the variance in the performance of schools. We recommended a more widespread study of operant competences of primary teachers in preparation for a competence based human resources management including competence based primary teacher training, performance target setting and appraisal.

Key words: Uganda, Primary Teachers, Competences, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, School Performance

Background

In 1997, the Uganda Government implemented the policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) where every family was allowed to send to primary school four children of school going age without paying school dues. Prior to the introduction of the Universal Primary Education, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Ugandan Government, had undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary education. Among its activities the project equipped primary schools with instructional material, textbooks and syllabi they required. Others included the improvement in the management of primary education, the training of primary teachers, and the construction of new primary schools located in areas where they would be accessible to a larger population of primary school going age. The author was commissioned along with a number of colleagues to evaluate the project. The team collected data on school performance for a period of five years.

Unexpectedly, the number of books available in the schools did not relate to school performance as indicated by the number and quality of grades. Rather, school performance depended on the teacher factor (Munene et al, 1997) composed of a set of work-based teacher practices such as controlling the class, designing a favourable classroom seating plan, and writing measurable learning objectives (The Improving Education Quality Research Core Team, 1999; Munene et al, 1997; Carasco, Munene, Kasente, and Odada, 1996). Subsequent interventions such as Education Standards Authority (ESA), (2003) and those associated with UPE policy have continued to marginalise or ignore teacher work-based practices in the measurement of quality primary education. For instance measures of quality education in UPE exclusively focused on material issues by using classroom construction, furniture and instructional materials as quality indicators and ignoring teacher practices.

This report summarises a study that focused on primary teacher practices that may make a difference in the professional life of a teacher, the learning of pupils and performance of primary schools in Uganda. It is divided into five sections. Immediately below we address the problem as the relative neglect of articulating the work based competences of a primary teacher in Uganda. This is followed by a brief review of the current approaches to the development of competence models and organisational citizenship behaviour used as a proxy for teacher professionalism. The third section describes the methodology with special focus on the competence development approach used in the study. The fourth section summarises and interprets the results. This is followed by discussion, limitations of the study and future research.

Statement of the Problem

Since the pioneering work of McClelland (1973), the management of competences has become increasingly prominent in the management of human resources and has led to an emerging body of practice referred to as Competence Based Management or CBM (Crawford, 2000). Although CBM has been practiced in UK and the USA, where the concept became popularised, (Boyatzis, 1982) for over 20 years and Australia for over 15 years (Crawford, 2000) we know very little usage of this practice in the Ugandan private and public sectors and in most of Africa. More significantly there is very little published application of this practice in the management of teacher “human resources” in Uganda despite the introduction of performance contracts among the teaching profession in Uganda and elsewhere. This has deprived school managers such as principals, and head teachers of a powerful teacher human resources management tool which could assist them in knowing whether or not their teachers are doing the right thing (Lane and Robinson, 1995). By providing an answer to this question primary school managers can manage their own and their teachers’ competences and practices and increase the quality of teaching and the well being of children during the primary school cycle. This study reports an exploratory study of two sets of teacher practices that are hypothesised to relate significantly to the performance of schools namely competence and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Literature Review

This section takes an over view of the terms and constructs used in the study. It distinguishes between competence profiles and competence models. It discusses some of the current models

informing the progress made in the practice and study of competence. This is followed by a discussion of teacher competence and finally introduces organisational citizenship behaviour used as a proxy for teacher professionalism in the study.

Competence Profiles and Competence Models

There is no shortage of models of competence among practitioners and academics (Stoof, Martens, Van Merriënboer, and Bastiaens, 2002). Moreover, the concept of “competence /competency model” itself is used differently by practitioners and academics. Academicians tend to use competence model as categorisation of fundamental difference in assumptions about behaviour and what data to collect about the behaviour. This is the way Stoof et al (2002) and others before them such as Messenger (1997) seem to use it. Practitioners such as Spencer and Spencer (1993) define a competence model as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to perform a job competently (Sanghi, 2007; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). Used this way a competence model is a profile outlining a set of behavioural, knowledge and attitudinal endowments required to perform. There is however a problem with equating competence model with competence profile since the person who develops or maps the competence may not question the underlying assumptions of what he or she is mapping. This might defeat the original idea of competence development and measurement which was to reduce the cultural and other assumptions from unfairly influencing human resources practices (McClelland, 1973). For instance, despite the influence of McClelland’s competence idea in the West, an African practitioner or academic interested in competence development must be cautious since the concept was, initially at least, significantly influenced by achievement motivation or the n-achievement (Spencer and Spencer, 1993) which is a singularly American construction of the source of superior performance. In this study we distinguish between

competence profiles from competence models. The former simply means a set of competence attributes while the latter refers to the epistemological assumptions into what constitutes a competence. In addition, we shall be using competence model in an epistemological sense as indicated here. Additionally, the work we report culminated in a competence profile of a primary school teacher rather than in a competence model of the teacher in Uganda.

Some of the Current Models of Competence Influencing Competence Practice

The competence construct was popularised in management literature by researchers from McBer Company such as McClelland, (1973), Boyatzis (1982) and Spencer and Spencer (1993). They defined the term to mean an underlying characteristic of a person resulting in “effective and /or superior performance in a job” (Boyatzis, 1982,p. 6). However, the theory and practice of competence is following two parallel streams (Messenger, 1997). The first is the covert and more popular version covering personal as well as meta-competences (Cheetam and Chivers, 1998). The second is the overt type of competence first proposed by Nord (1969), later referred to as role based competences by Boyatzis (1982), and is now commonly known as either occupational or functional competences(Cheetam and Chivers, 1998). It is promoted by National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in Britain and by International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instructions (IBSTPI) in the USA (Russ-Eft, Bober, de la Teja, Foxon, and Koszalka, 2008). The main distinction between the two is that the latter articulates role behaviours that are observable and measurable (Dierickx and Cool, 1989). The former promotes competences which are unconscious and subconscious (Boyatzis (1982), tacit, complex and ambiguous (Reed and DeFilleppe, 1990; Lado and Wilson, 1994) such as decision making

and interpersonal relations. It makes a clear distinction between performance statements and competences, requires an accompanying competence dictionary (Spencer and Spencer, 1993) and conceives of a competence as a state rather than as an action (see Sanghi, 2007).

More recently Stooft, Martens, Van Merriënboer, and Bastiaens, (2002) categorised the competence models as either objectivist or constructivist. Practitioners and academicians following an objectivist tradition (see for instance Heinsman, de Hoogh, Koopman, and van Muijen, 2007) assume 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. Stooft et al (2002) assert that a search for the one single true set is hindering a creative use of the concept as efforts are geared towards finding and defending the one true set and its definition. They propose instead, to embrace a constructivist view of competence which allows users of the concept to define competence from their own environment.

Following a behavioural psychology paradigm, we identify another well established dichotomy among competences namely operant and mediational (Munene, Bbosa, and Eboyu, 2004) competence. The dichotomy reflects Skinnerian behaviourism on the one hand and humanistic Psychology on the other (Nord, 1969). Whereas mediational competencies predominantly draw from the latter, operant or functional competences correspond to the former. Both views however conceive of work behaviour as a relation between an individual and her/his work environment. Skinnerian behaviourism suggests that you focus on the external environment in which for instance, teachers' behaviours occur in order to understand and predict this relation for it is the

environment that is predominantly responsible for generating the relation (Hineline, 1992). Those who prescribe to humanistic psychology believe that to explain a teacher's outward behaviour you focus on the inner and unobservable environment such as values, aptitude, and attributes that *mediate* between the individual and his /her external work environment. Those who prescribe to this view tend to prefer personal competences against the standards approach to competences (see Reynolds, 1999; Messenger, 1997). Those who utilise the operant view of competences pursue the functional and standards approach to competence development. See for instance Russ-Eft et al (2008).

The personal and standards approach to competence development are objectivist and suffer from the weaknesses of this philosophy some of which were outlined above. In addition the personal approach to competences, like mediational 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. To remove the ambiguity and to lower the survival threshold of organisations including schools in Africa, we propose to develop and utilise the operant competences that focus on the relationship between the external work environment and the individual teacher. We define an operant competence as a competence that directly influences the work environment and contains its own reinforcements. For instance, when a teacher meets or exceeds performance objectives he/she influences his/her working environment in at least two ways. One, it creates a situation of anticipation of a response from the head teacher or colleagues because the behaviour is observable. Two, irrespective of the expected response from one's superior or colleagues (the environment), the act itself is positively reinforcing because its impact on other aspects of the environment are observable to the

performer. For instance, better grades may have been achieved, a football team may have won the national school championship and more students may have been attracted to the school. Such clear outputs and outcomes can for a time inspire the teacher to be more productive until such a time as the connection between the behavioural competences that produced the outputs and outcomes reach extinction. Significantly from the point of view of this work, the operant competence approach to teacher competences articulates teacher practices that make a difference under a given environment. Theoretically operant competences are in effect a combination of mediational and role behaviour approaches (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999) to competence development and management because they are outcomes of the interaction between teacher input such as values, technical knowledge and the teacher work environment. This view of competence as a set of behaviours able to reflect underlying personal characteristics such as attitudes and values is also shared by others. They suggest that competences will be of practical use only when they are not only role specific but behavioural as well (Richey, et al, 2001). Specifically operant competences acknowledge the presence of underlying states while promoting their behavioural manifestations in interaction with the environment. They are similar to but not substitutable with the performance statements found in the IBSTPI approach. An operant competence is considered as a hierarchical system of behaviours (Shepherd, 2001) with its own subsystems of performance statements.

Teacher Competences and Performance

The introduction of competences and standards approach to the teaching profession is following a similar trend to that of other vocational and general management area, at least in Britain

(Reynolds, 1999) and has attracted adversaries and advocates (Prescott, 1995). The adversaries argue that the Standards approach to the teaching profession provides for a narrow focus creating the opinion that subject knowledge is sufficient for the professional practice of a teacher. Specifically, the innovation suffers from the following shortcomings (Reynolds, 1999):

- The approach requires the teacher to display specific performance outcomes thereby inhibiting creativity
- Ignores professional values of a teacher
- Divorces process from product by focusing on the outcome (standard) while ignoring how the outcome has been reached (e.g. maintaining discipline in class by chaining children to desks!)

The implied objections indicate that teaching as a vocation is too complex and characterised as much by tacit as well as explicit knowledge so that defining it purely in terms of explicit roles is to significantly distort the profession. Another criticism raised against the standards and functional competence approach to teaching is that learners may acquire the correct responses without understanding why they should emit a specific response or practice (O'Reilly and McCrystall, 1995).

From the African teacher's point view, there are several problems associated with a competence framework that deliberately discourages defining the teacher's profession in terms of explicit roles. The first and most important is that it promotes ambiguity. Ambiguity however, can reach an extreme form where it prevents the role incumbent from understanding the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes (Lippman and Rumelt, 1982). In essence, ambiguity is subjective as well as context specific so that many role incumbents in Africa including teachers,

for instance, may be experiencing the kind of extreme ambiguity that Lippman and Rumelt (1982) warned about and that may result in organisational stagnation and decline. In contrast, role incumbents elsewhere such as in Asia may not be experiencing the same degree of ambiguity or any ambiguity. The second problem is that African workers and managers are, moreover, routinely singled out as being guided by theories of formal employment that are culturally out of their experience, which they superficially follow (Smith, Peterson and Schwartz, 2002, Hofstede, 1994) and which may in turn be causally related to the low productivity in African nations (International Labour Organisation, 2006). Lippman and Rumelt's (1982) warning suggests that it may not be the cultural factor underlying the theories that makes them difficult for Africans to apply comprehensively. Rather it may be the ambiguous competences that the theories promote. The third problem is that enabling, mediational or personal competences do not readily render themselves to evaluation (Armstrong and Baron, 1995) and therefore compromising opportunity for performance management. This is however a major setback in many Third World countries (Mendonca and Kanungo 1993) and certainly in African countries south of the Sahara (Munene, 1994). What these countries need are tools for management of performance. Such tools are best derived from behavioural competences that aim at role clarity rather than enabling competences that generate methodological as well as casual ambiguity.

Studies endorsing the Standards approach to teacher training are accumulating (Garland, 1993, and Prescott, 1995). One study conducted by O'Reilly and McCrystall (1995) used a sample of stakeholders ranging from university teachers, college tutors and Education and Library Boards to evaluate the efficacy of the standards approach to teacher training. The evaluation found the

approach to be an efficient and effective method for transferring skills to the work situation and a close resemblance to the work of a teacher in the actual work situation (O'Reilly and McCrystall, 1995). Another study identified eleven competence areas with specific and measurable competences such as making home visits to establish vocational opportunities of students and developing research protocols to establish the relationship between parents and students (Mndebele, 1997).

Despite the increasing attention paid to teacher practices or standards, there is still very little published work on the subject on the African Continent. Moreover, focus is on vocational subjects despite work indicating that teacher practices have demonstrable impact on primary school performance (Munene et al 1997). A recent publication utilising the definition of competence as the relationship between the worker and his/her work and task environment (Kagari and Munene, 2007) examined engineering lecturer's operant competences which were summarised under seven key results (KRAs) areas (Armstrong and Baron, 1995) or competences in IBSTPI terminology (Richey et al, 2001). Under each KRA the study outlined more specific behavioural competences addressing two questions namely what you need to know and what you need to be able to do to fulfil each KRA. The overall outcome was a list of specific action oriented performance statements referred to in this study as operant competences that could easily be measured. The study described here had a similar objective namely to identify a set of primary teacher practices or work based competences that are specific, measurable, learner centred and can be used by both the supervisor and the teacher to evaluate the performance of a primary teacher.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and Teacher Performance

A substantive concern against behavioural competences and standards approach to teacher training is that the approach is too narrow to encompass the complex nature of the teaching profession (Reynolds, 1999). A construct that is found to address professional dedication generally, is referred to as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Organ, 1988). The original definition referred to individual voluntary behaviour that is not formally recognised by the formal reward system which cumulatively promotes the functioning of an organisation (Organ, 1988). These are behaviours that every organisation requires to institutionalise new ways of conducting business and to remain competitive (Katz and Khan, 1978). As the term suggests, extra role behaviours are outside an individual's job description but to a greater or lesser extent, are taken for granted.

Initially, OCB was conceived as comprising of three types of voluntary behaviours. The first was helping or altruism, the second was compliance or conscientiousness, the third was innovativeness (Smith, Organ, and Near, 1983). The first is directed to the individual, the second and third to the organisation. Altruism refers to helping a co-worker who is unable to do her work but without which the organisation may not meet its stated targets. Conscientiousness means doing your job unfailingly even when you can do less and get away with it. Innovativeness is about frequent willingness to tender alternative ways of dealing with relational or task related problems (Katz and Khan, 1978; Moon, et al 2005). Later, three other components

namely, sportsmanship, civic virtue and courtesy were added (Organ, 1988) and researched (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

The growing list of components of OCB indicates a construct in transition. Organ et al (2006) have recognised the transition and were inclined to agree that a competing framework known as contextual performance (Borman and Motowildo, 1993) may provide a more valid construct to represent the individual and organisation performance-directed behaviours OCB is trying to explain. Contextual performance (CP) refers to doing those acts that enable task or professional performance to occur at the level expected by lubricating all aspects of the social system so that each aspect moves smoothly. The recognised functions are to promote and to protect the individual, one's organisation, and one's profession (Moon, Van Dyne and Wrobel, 2005). It is these and similar performance-directed behaviours that sceptics of the competence based approach to teacher training say get missed out of and invalidate the competence and standards based approach to such a complex profession as teaching (Reynolds, 1999).

A recent study of teacher OCB (Oplatka, 2006), provides supporting evidence that the contextual performance or OCB constructs can capture teacher professionalism in terms of performance-directed behaviours. The study identified four components of teacher OCB/CP. The first one involved assisting pupils beyond what is required such as undertaking to provide special assistance to pupils outside class and helping out students with personal problem. The second component concerned classroom performance- directed behaviour including the introduction of innovations in teaching and in designing assignments. The third focused on fellow staff in terms of standing in, helping with administrative tasks, and providing emotional assistance. The fourth

was oriented towards the school as an organisation like teacher participating in school events and activities and taking on unrewarded roles in the school. One of the questions that this study sets out to examine is whether or not the operant competence or standards approach cannot capture these and similar performance enhancing behaviours? An indication that this may be so is found in Kagaari and Munene (2007) who conducted a related study using engineering lecturers as a sample. They found a positive correlation between operant competences of a university engineering lecturer and OCB. They concluded that it is not the competence approach which is at fault, rather it is the specific method an analyst adopts to extract the competences that may require re-evaluation.

Research Questions:

This study addressed the main question whether it is possible to capture the complexity of a teaching profession through the use of functional /operant competences since they tend to focus on results rather than process and values. The question was approached through three interrelated sub questions:

- 1. Are there KRAs or competence domains and operant competences of a primary school teacher that can capture the complexity of a primary school teacher's job in Uganda and correlate with his/her scores on contextual performance measured as OCB?*
- 2. On aggregate, can the operant competences prevalent in a school correlate with the performance of the school as a unit?*
- 3. What is the relative influence of contextual performance measured as OCB and operant competences on the performance of a school as a unit?*

Methodology

Overview of the Methodology

The study population was all qualified primary teachers and schools in Uganda. In this country all primary schools are controlled by a central ministry which sets the syllabus, trains the teachers and sets one national primary school qualifying examination for the pupils. The study examined teacher operant competences using samples of primary teachers in schools from two neighbouring local governments. The study first gathered in-depth data from 10 qualified teachers from two of the ten best performing schools in the country which were also situated in the same neighbouring local governments mentioned above. It involved the development of eight KRAs using a locally developed form of hierarchical (Shepherd, 2001) job analysis referred to as Operant Competence Analysis and Profiling (OCAP). The information gathered was then converted into 120 operant competences or performance statement (Richey, et al, 2001) which formed part of the questionnaire for the second quantitative study. The questionnaire was administered in a cross sectional survey of teachers in 100 schools from the two local governments. The questionnaire contained items on supervisory rated OCB and self report items to measure the performance of each school. Other items measuring demographic variables as well as school characteristics such as age of school were also included. Lastly we collected a generic job description of a primary school teacher from a notice board provided by an international education agency and contrasted it with the KRAs of a teacher derived from the OCAP approach which we describe below.

Operant Competence Analysis and Profiling (OCAP) Framework

The method used to profile a primary teacher in Uganda was developed locally (Munene et al, 2004). We refer to the method as operant competence analysis and profiling (OCAP) because it deliberately focuses on overt action words in mapping competence profiles. The basic unit of study in operant competence analysis and profiling is the key result area (KRA) (Armstrong and Baron, 1995). A KRA is an output oriented statement which describes an area where a role incumbent must get results. Although results and output oriented, the KRA is nevertheless broad enough to subsume several performance statements we refer to in our work as operant competences.

Operant competence analysis is a hybrid of the conventional methods of job task and role analysis (JTR) (Pearn and Kandola, 1993) hierarchical (Sheppard, 2001) as well as functional analysis (Fine and Cronshaw, 1999). OCAP introduces additional steps designed to maximise the opportunity to “operationalise” all identified competences. Below are the hierarchical steps one goes through in operant competence analysis.

- 1. Agreeing on the mission of the school.* This is done by revisiting and confirming existing mission or creating a workable one to be confirmed later through a conventional strategic planning exercise.
- 2. Agreeing on the mission of the department or unit where the role being competence analysed is situated.* This stage is treated as the one above. Few organisations in Africa have departmental missions, quite often requiring spending time designing one.
- 3. Writing and defining the role of the incumbent being profiled.* The incumbent is assisted to state his/her role defined as a set of obligations one fulfils in order to contribute to the mission of

the department or unit. Like the two missions above, the definition is a single sentence. It answers the question “why should the role being competence analysed exist in the department?”

4. Agreeing and defining KRAs: The KRAs are in practice defined as those aspects of one’s role which if not performed, fundamentally compromise the role, the department and the firm/organisation. The impact of a KRA may be sudden such as when a public relations officer issues information detrimental to an organisation. It may be cumulative as when an auditor fails to identify areas of risk to focus on during the auditing process. Following the convention (Armstrong and Baron, 1995) each role must contain at least five and preferably no more than twelve KRAs each, written in actionable terms. In a situation where the role is new to the organisation, a supervisor and others close to the role go through these steps.

5. Verifying and validating the KRAs: When competence analysis is conducted under a workshop setting, the role holders publicly present their KRAs and the role definitions to departmental or unit representatives. The purpose is to agree that the KRAs adequately cover what the role entails and do not overlap with the KRAs of other role holders. Where overlaps in KRAs are identified a decision is made by consensus to assign or re-assign the offending KRA in order to remove the overlap. A supervisor endorses the departmental mission statement, the role, definition, and the KRAs when an OCAP Questionnaire is used.

6. Defining the Context of each KRA: Uncovering and documenting the tacit knowledge role incumbents accumulate over time and the complexities embedded in the prevalent competencies. Taking each KRA separately, the incumbent is assisted to answer at least three of the following questions adapted from Armstrong and Baron (1995).

1. Which groups, individuals, or institutions do you interact with in carrying out the KRA?
2. What is the content of interaction, or, what do you want to get/learn from the other party?

3. What regular problems do you have to overcome in order to carry out the KRA?
4. What difficult decisions do you have to make in order to carry out the KRA?
5. What flexibility do you have when carrying out the KRA? What opportunities do you have to use your judgement?

7. Converting the context of KRAs into knowledge and behavioural competences

The data from the previous stage are converted into knowledge competences under a column: “What you need to know”. Each knowledge competences is further analysed to identify at least two behaviours that must be performed to acquire the required knowledge. The listed behaviour is what is referred to as behavioural or operant competence. It is written under the column “What you need to be able to do”. Through practice and convention (Armstrong and Baron, 1995) each KRA must have no less than five knowledge competences and 10 operant competences or performance statements.

Measurement of Variables

School Performance: Performance was measured using self reports completed by head teachers who answered two questions. The first question required them to indicate whether their schools had “ranked” at least once among the annually published fifty best performing schools in the Country in the last five years. The second question requested the respondent to indicate the percentage of pupils who had obtained grade 4, 5, or 6 every year in the last five years. The percentage would indicate how many children from a school progress to the better senior secondly schools in the country.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: We used a 20 item measure we developed locally and first used in Nigeria by the first author (see Munene, 1994). The items were meant to capture conscientiousness, altruism, courtesy and innovation. The reliability for the scale was .83. OCB information was provided by supervisors. The data was factor analysed using a varimax rotation that produced three factors. The first two were interpretable. One was named conscientiousness the second was a combination of altruism, courtesy and innovativeness. Since we could not interpret the third, we dropped it out of further analysis. We calculated indices for the two factors as well as a composite OCB index which used all the 20 items.

Teacher Competences: Teacher competences were measured by one hundred and twenty four operant competences on a four Likert scale ranging from “this is very true of this school, this is true of this school, this is untrue of this school and this is very untrue of this school”. An exploratory factor analysis was used to identify eight latent key results area which were used in subsequent analysis.

Sample Characteristics

384 teachers from 100 primary schools from two adjacent local governments in and around Kampala, the capital City, took part in the study. The majority of teachers had been in their current school between 6 to 10 years. There was no difference in tenure between male and females. The mean age was between 25-35 years. There was no significant difference between the age of female and male teachers.

Results

This section follows the three specific questions guiding this study. Data is presented on the KRAs of the primary teacher, the KRAs and their relationship to teacher OCB and finally KRAs and school performance.

The KRAs of a Primary School Teacher

The qualitative study yielded eight KRAs (see table 5) and 124 operant competences (see the appendix). These were converted into a questionnaire with a 0.97 coefficient of reliability using Cronbach Alpha. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation returned eight factors. These were correlated against each other and against the pooled competences in order to assess their validity as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Zero order Correlation among Primary Teacher Competence Based KRAs

The KRA with the largest percentage of variance is planning and executing educational trips, debates and competitions. It also correlates highly with the total teacher operant competences indicating that it is an acceptable substitute although it contained 20% of the operant competences. One of the operant competences was setting regulations for the educational outing, debates and competitions. Another was studying the syllabus to determine topics that can be used for this purpose. The third was writing and accounting for the budget for the activities. The second KRA in terms of correlating with the total pool of competences is guiding and counselling students. Again, with the coefficient of .82, this is also a good substitute for the pool. In the factor analysis, this KRA accounted for 4.3% of variance. It contained 23 items including guiding pupils on options available to solve their personal problems, how to revise for examinations and organising debates on examinable topics.

A point of interest is the content of operant competences and their overall KRAs that the OCAP framework can generate. We notice from the table that 50% of the KRAs focus on the traditional classroom work and the other 50% emphasize work outside the classroom. This means that operant competence or Standards approach is capable of deriving complex as well as simple behaviours that can capture the complexity of the teaching and any other profession. A close look at the operant competences (see appendix) reveals that they are either learner or teacher centred directing the teacher what to do to assist the learner.

KRAs and OCB among Primary School Teachers

One of the problems cited against behavioural competence frameworks being applied to complex jobs like teaching and management is whether or not they capture the complexity involved in enabling the teacher to perform her job. A construct we invoked to test the efficacy of the standards or operant competence approach to primary school teaching and training is OCB. We introduced OCB through the argument that it contains some of the soft competences that are normally associated with professionalism as against straightforward technical knowledge. We argued that if competences of a teacher are comprehensively identified, profiled and measured, they should be able to correlate with a measure of OCB. Table 2 below provides the findings of the resultant analysis.

Table 2 about here

The table indicates that the supervisor-scored conscientiousness component of OCB correlated positively with educational trips, co-curricular activities, and attending school and PTA meetings. The mixed component composed of altruism, innovation, and courtesy correlated

positively with educational trips, guiding and counselling, and co-curricular activities. The composite OCB correlated with educational trips, guiding and counselling, co-curricular activities, attending school and PTA meetings, and the pooled teacher operant competences. An interesting finding from the table is that composite OCB did not correlate with specifically classroom related operant competences or KRAs but correlated with the pooled operant competences. This confirms existing knowledge about OCB that it is reflected more in the aggregate rather than in the specifics of performance (Organ et al, 2006).

KRAs and School Performance

Another question we raised was whether KRAs and their associated operant competences are in any way related to the performance of schools. Table 3 below summarises the relationship between school performance and operant competences of teachers in the participating schools.

Table 3 about here

The table indicates that three KRAs correlated positively with whether the school had ranked among the best 50 annually publicised schools. One KRA comprises of the technical skills that teachers are taught during teacher training. The other two are composed of typically work based competences. The pooled teacher operant competences also correlated with ranking but not with grades pupils receive in a specific year. This may be because a specific performance result such as grades is often a combination of many organisational and individual issues such as the level of aptitude of pupils so that people related behaviours cannot be expected to predict such results on their own (Organ, et al, 2006).

Finally we explored the combined relationship of OCB and operant competences on the performance of primary schools. Table 4 shows the regression results which we used to examine the relationship.

Table 4 about here

We selected the KRAs that had correlated with performance in table 3. They included educational trips, setting and marking examination, attending school and PTA meetings and the pooled operant competences. We included the composite OCB, mixed component OCB and conscientiousness. These variables were able to predict 25% of the variance in school performance. The specifically technical KRA of setting and marking examinations contributed most to the variance. This was followed by the pooled teacher operant competences and the less technical KRA of attending staff and PTA meetings. The distribution of predictors of performance among technical and non-technical KRAs provided more evidence that the competences of a primary teacher lie as much outside as inside the classroom. It has also answered our overall question whether operant competences that go beyond the classroom can be identified, that they can be measured and that they can be found to relate to desired results even when they are output oriented.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Operant Competence Framework aims to institutionalise strategic human resources management by initiating and establishing competence based management and training in

primary schools and other organisations in Uganda and on the Continent generally. The justification for the model includes massive organisational failures experienced on the African continent, the domination of western management theories that deliberately promote casual ambiguity and probably baffle managers and workers from a different cultural background, and the African head teacher and manager who routinely imitates western management practices without sufficient comprehension to aid informed evaluation and adaptation. The operational objectives of the Operant Competence Framework are to assist African managers roll back the ambiguity found in management theory and practice, to uncover the complexities embedded in the predominantly “mediational” or personal competencies, and to document the tacit knowledge that role incumbents accumulate over time.

Our overall question was whether we could identify KRAs for a primary teacher that could not only clearly state the output of the role but also capture the complexity of the teaching profession. Our second equally important question was whether we could provide some evidence of the predictive validity of the KRAs identified. The analysis section above has summarised the evidence for both questions. The discussion below provides an over view of the answer to the first question. It is based on a table that contrasts the standards approach to job profiling as reflected in the OCAP process and the traditional one which favours mediational and enabling competences.

Table 5 about here: The KRAs and Main Responsibilities of a Primary Teacher in Uganda

The right hand column contains the description of the primary teachers' job that we transcribed from a notice board of an international educational agency. We present it here to emphasise the "tacitness" and complexity associated with *mediational* competences as described earlier. It also looks at a teacher's role in its broadest professional view possible. Significantly for this study, it summarises the difficulties of the teachers who use such a description in their everyday work at school as well as the head teacher who supervises them. For instance it is not clear what the teacher must or should do in each of the recommended roles. It is not clear what the supervisor such as head teacher should look for to confirm that the teacher has done his/her job. It is also not clear what the pupils should be doing. Those who favour the competence and standards approach to teaching see a welcome departure where the focus is on learner outcomes and teacher outputs instead of teacher inputs such professional values (Garland, 1993, Prescott, 1995).

The left and middle columns show a sharp distinction in terms of clarity in comparison to the main responsibilities of a teacher described in the right hand column. The two columns are written in an operational language of the practicing teacher while encompassing the complexity expected in each KRA. On the contrary, the main responsibilities of a teacher in the right hand column tend to be philosophical, value laden and relatively ambiguous in terms of what exactly the teacher must do. Because of their philosophical face value, they give the impression that they describe comprehensively the role of a professional teacher. However, they are not usable by a newly qualified teacher without intensive coaching or extended trial and error period. The general reaction of workers faced with such ambiguous job descriptions is to ignore what is ambiguous and to focus on what is clear even when what is left out may have as great an impact as that which is clear. Our proposition is that, a teacher given the KRAs developed from the

OCAP process and as presented in the left and middle columns should know at least 90% of what to do and to do it well.

Conclusion

The study set out to examine teacher practices that matter to primary school teaching and learning in Uganda. To get to the practices, we developed and applied the Operant Competence Analysis and Profiling (OCAP) Framework and its accompanying instrument. The framework is based on the constructivist approach to competences which suggests that it is counterproductive to spend energy looking for the one true set or sets of competences. Like the standards approach to competence management and development, the OCAP framework is output oriented making it possible for the users of the competence to know exactly what to expect when they set out to produce what is expected of them. The study has shown that operant competences under each KRA or competence area are generally complex and learner centred. Two other issues have also come out. The first is that careful scrutiny of both the KRAs and the operant competences shows that both are about what the teacher does rather than the job he or she does. This is an advantage that comes with output oriented profiling. It means that a teacher provided with an operant competence based job description does not have much work to do to identify what behaviours she needs to perform his/her job according to minimum acceptable standards. Most of the required behaviours are either described or are clearly implied so that a trained teacher would have little difficulty in constructing for herself the specific activities required in each operant competence. The teacher is also assisted in this because the competences are output rather than input oriented. The second issue that has come out, and to which we have referred to a number of times, is the complexity of most of the operant competences and of course all of the KRAs. This complexity means that many of the popular personal or mediating competences such as

leadership, initiative, planning, judgment, analysis, thinking and feeling are implicated in almost all KRAs but do not take centre stage and therefore obscuring the specific activities required to perform according to expectation.

We have been able to demonstrate that the tacit knowledge assumed to make up most of the teaching profession can be uncovered and measured. We have also demonstrated that it may be advantageous to bring tacit knowledge from the individual tacit to the public explicit domain. The advantage was captured through our demonstration that role clarity improves with operant competence analysis and profiling. We indirectly did this by juxtaposing a philosophically oriented job description of a teacher with the job description developed from the OCAP process. Whereas the former looks comprehensive and professional, it leaves the teacher and his supervisor with little to go on in getting the work done. On the other hand, the OCAP description shows clearly what the teacher should do without losing any of the complexity associated with the teaching profession. This is especially so when each KRA is read in conjunction with the relevant operant competences.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The study has at least three limitations that we are aware of. They include sample representativeness, performance level for the in-depth data and a systems approach. This was an empirically driven study. The validity of our findings depends very much on whether our sample was representative. This unfortunately was not the case since the schools we studied are located within the capital and its suburbs. It may be fair to say that teachers in remote areas develop different operant competences in order to deal with teaching in a rural environment. Unlike our

predecessors such as the McBer researchers who begin data collection with best performers (Spencer and Spencer, 1993), we did not interview outstanding teachers from the schools where we derived the qualitative data. Because of the length of the time the interview required, we opted for teachers who are motivated and enthusiastic about teaching and who would be interested in reflecting on how they work. It is conceivable that we would have got a different set of data had we used only outstanding teachers. The OCAP process uses a systems approach. We however limited our respondents to four subsystems namely school mission, departmental mission, the role to be played within these subsystems and the work context of each KRA. It is conceivable that we could have derived a different set of KRAs had we incorporated other perspectives such as the mission of the central ministry of education or the millennium goals. It was in consideration of these limitations that we were compelled to address the issue of predictive validity of our findings in the same study.

Subsequent research should address some of the above weaknesses especially collecting fresh set of data based on recognisable outstanding primary school teachers in the schools where qualitative data is to be collected. Many of the best primary schools in Uganda, although controlled by the Central government, are all privately run institutions. This study did not address ownership. Subsequent research should address this issue. The same study should also be conducted in the rural areas as well as in the urban areas for comparison. When these limitations are addressed subsequent research should be able to use confirmatory factor analysis instead of the exploratory routine this study has used.

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Table 1:

Zero order Correlation among Primary Teacher Competence Based KRAs

	Educational trips	Set & mark examinations	Guide & counsel	Co-curricular activities	Continuous Assessment	Attend school and PTA meetings	Plan and teach lessons	Prepare learning materials
Plan and execute educational trips, debates and competitions	1							
Set and mark examinations	0.55**	1.00						
Guide and counsel pupils and fellow teachers	0.65**	0.59**	1.00					
Plan and execute co-curricular activities	0.58**	0.45**	0.55**	1.00				
Administer continuous assessment	0.59**	0.61**	0.57**	0.57**	1.00			
Attend school and PTA meetings	0.58**	0.39**	0.54**	0.65**	0.43**	1.00		
Plan and teach lessons	0.41**	0.58**	0.53**	0.44**	0.50**	0.37**	1.00	
Prepare learning and teaching materials	0.60**	0.59**	0.65**	0.48**	0.48**	0.41**	0.49**	1.00
Pooled Teacher operant competences	0.83**	0.77**	0.82**	0.77**	0.76**	0.73**	0.66**	0.77**
Eigen value	33.66	6.79	5.16	4.09	3.38	3.21	2.85	2.33
% of variance	28.05	5.66	4.30	3.41	2.82	2.67	2.38	1.94
Cumulative %	28.05	33.71	38.01	41.41	44.23	46.90	49.28	51.22

** Significant at .001 or better

Table 2:

Operant Competences and OCB (N = 280 – 330¹)

KRAs & Pooled Operant Competences	Conscientiousness	Mixed Component	Composite OCB
Planning and managing educational trips	0.14**	0.21**	0.17**
Setting & marking examinations	0.00	0.05	0.03
Guiding and counselling	0.09	0.12*	0.10*
Planning and managing co-curricular activities	0.10*	0.12*	0.11*
Continuous Assessment	0.08	0.06	0.06
Attending school and PTA meetings	0.10*	0.15	0.11*

** Significant at .001 or better
* Significant at .05 or better

¹N varied with items.

Table 3

Competences and School Performance (N = 100)

KRAs and Pooled Operant Competences	Rank	Grades	Total of Grades and Rank
Planning and managing educational trips	0.16*	0.04	0.08
Setting & marking examinations	0.14*	0.00	0.04
Guiding and counselling	0.03	0.02	0.05
Planning and managing co-curricular activities	-0.02	0.01	0.03
Continuous Assessment	0.07	-0.05	-0.01
Attending school and PTA meetings	0.14*	0.09	0.13*
Planning and teach lessons	0.04	0.06	0.07
Preparing learning materials	0.01	0.00	0.02
Pooled teacher Operant Competences	0.14*	-0.01	0.05

* Significant at .05 or better

Table 4:
Regression on Primary School Performance

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R Square	Adjusted R square	F	P
(Constant)	0.50	0.26		1.93	0.06	.25	.22	6.7	.00
Educational trips	0.18	0.12	0.22	1.46	0.15				
Set & mark examinations	0.41	0.14	0.37	2.89	0.00				
Attend school and PTA meetings	0.22	0.10	0.27	2.21	0.03				
Composite OCB	0.72	0.48	0.65	1.49	0.14				
Mixed Component	0.21	0.27	0.23	0.81	0.42				
Conscientiousness	0.01	0.23	0.01	0.04	0.97				
Teacher Operant Competences	0.71	0.30	0.55	2.37	0.02				

Table 5:

The KRAs and Main Responsibilities of a Primary Teacher in Uganda

Qualitatively derived KRAs	Empirically Derived KRAs	Main Responsibilities (Aga Khan Education Service, Uganda; Notice Board, undated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan lessons and teach according to the primary school syllabus ▪ Prepare and administer tests, examinations, and revision exercises to evaluate students as per education policy ▪ Counsel and guide pupils in line with the school policy ▪ Organise and facilitate co-curricular activities in line with Ministry of Education and Sports and school regulations ▪ Organise educational trips, conferences, debates and school competitions in line with primary school syllabus and school policy ▪ Prepare pupils' reports and files every end of term in line with school regulations ▪ Attend staff and Parents and Teachers' Association (PTA) meetings ▪ Undertake duty, supervise the activities of pupil leaders on a weekly basis in line with school regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan and execute educational trips, debates and competitions ▪ Set and mark examinations ▪ Guide and counsel pupils and fellow teachers ▪ Plan and execute co-curricular activities ▪ Administer continuous assessment ▪ Attend school and PTA meetings ▪ Plan and teach lessons ▪ Prepare learning and teaching materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skilfully impart learner's knowledge to assist them develop both desire and ability to learn. ▪ Encourage the development of the learners' individual personality and give guidance in the information of positive and acceptable values ▪ Promote the spirit of collective responsibility of the school and the teaching profession ▪ Bridge the gap between educational institution and the community to ensure fruitful interaction between the two ▪ Interpret and implement the broad aims and objectives of education ▪ Inspire in the learner the desire to learn and develop his/her ability to acquire knowledge and desirable skills to enable him participate effectively in public life and national development ▪ Exemplify basic moral values and ethics of teaching profession and promote the spirit of collective responsibility which educational institutions owe to the Public.

Appendices

Appendix 1

KRA: Planning and executing educational trips, debates and school competitions	
Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Set regulations for the discussion	0.73
2. Write letters to invite the resource people and pupils from other schools	0.70
3. Mobilise pupils to attend the seminar/workshops	0.70
4. Select right pupils for seminar topics and debates	0.70
5. Evaluate the seminar or workshops to determine whether the objectives were achieved	0.69
6. Make reports on seminars/workshops to the administration	0.68
7. Direct and facilitate the discussions	0.67
8. Study the syllabus and identify topics that can be addressed through workshops and seminars or trips	0.67
9. Invite the right people for the topic	0.66
10. Distribute topics to students	0.66
11. Make requisitions for the logistics needed in preparation and implementation	0.61
12. Budget within the vote for such education activities	0.61
13. Determine materials to use	0.57
14. Write letters to pupils' parents to inform them of the trips	0.55
15. Identify available career opportunity in the working industry	0.41
16. Invite successful people in different professions to talk to the pupils	0.40
17. Provide elementary sex education lessons	0.34

Appendix 2:

KRA: Setting and administering revision exercises and examinations	
Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Set examination according to school syllabus	0.73
2. Set examinations within the specified period	0.70
3. Construct questions that refer to the subject matter	0.70
4. Set a standard examination in terms of format and numbers	0.68
5. Time the examinations	0.66
6. Formulate questions to be included in the examination	0.65
7. Provide clear instructions	0.65
8. Administer the examination within the specified regulations	0.60
9. Proof read to remove errors before issuing the exams	0.56
10. Invigilate and oversee exams	0.55
11. Ensure students start at the same time and end at the same time	0.54
12. Get hold of and summarize the school syllabus	0.51
13. Estimate content per lesson	0.50
14. Develop a marking guide/scheme	0.48
15. Look for and apply examining methods	0.46
16. Read and take out what you need from the syllabus	0.46
17. Grade the marks using UNEB grading	0.44
18. Identify teaching methods to be used	0.40
19. Summarize notes for pupils	0.39

Appendix 3:

KRA::Guide and Counsel Pupils

Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Advise and direct pupils on the options they can use to solve their problems	0.68
2. Identify individual pupils' problems	0.59
3. Prepare and organise students to make presentations at the assembly	0.57
4. Compile revision material and discuss them with pupils	0.57
5. Refer pupils' cases that are beyond your jurisdiction to officers above you	0.52
6. Facilitate pupils to sing National Anthem and National school Anthem through providing the right musical way	0.51
7. Counsel pupils on academic matters	0.50
8. Talk to parents about pupils' problems	0.50
9. Guide pupils on how to revise	0.49
10. Listen to pupils' problems and try to solve them together with them	0.47
11. Attend to pupils' cases of indiscipline on the school compound	0.47
12. Organise straight talks	0.47
13. Organise and administer assemblies during the week	0.47
14. Organise debates on examinable topics	0.46
15. Direct pupils to available reading materials, which may not be known to them	0.46
16. Guide pupils on how to achieve their desired opportunities	0.44
17. Recommend to administration the disciplinary action that should be made to the cases of indiscipline	0.44
18. Invite resource people to talk to pupils about academic opportunities	0.43
19. Promote punctuality through disciplining pupils who come late	0.42
20. Write a report to the headmaster's office about the proceedings of the week	0.41
21. Attend pupils' assembly once a week	0.41
22. Supervise the conducting of lessons during the week	0.38
23. Guide pupils in reciting the national anthem and school prayer every morning	0.37

Appendix 4

KRA: Organise and Facilitate Co-Curricular Activities

Operant competences	Coefficient
1. Requisition and make lists of materials required for co-curricular activities e.g. sports equipment, musical instruments etc	0.74
2. Identify activities to be carried out through the week	0.70
3. Provide pupils with materials for the co-curricular activities	0.69
4. Give pupils an opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities	0.69
5. List groups of pupils involved in each of the activity	0.67
6. Plan how to incorporate co-curricular activities in the school calendar	0.64
7. Identify, source and plan school co-curricular activities	0.63
8. Identify requirements necessary for the week's activities	0.62
9. Oversee students participation in the co-curricular activities	0.62
10. Determine how many hours are required for co-curricular activities	0.60

Appendix 5:

KRA: Conduct Continuous Assessment

Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Mark and score the test/assignment	0.68
2. Administer test/assignment	0.66
3. Maintain records of pupils' performance	0.62
4. Examine pupils from all angles of the topic	0.61
5. Evaluate pupils performance from the test assignment	0.60
6. Record marks	0.59
7. Set deadlines for receiving assignment/handing in answer sheets	0.55
8. Formulate balanced test	0.53
9. Assist pupils in revising	0.50
10. Follow testing principles	0.47
11. Prepare a test from the topic	0.41

Appendix 6

KRA: Plan and teach lessons

Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Evaluate pupils' understanding of the lesson	0.69
2. Ask pupils questions and get them to participate	0.66
3. Prepare a scheme of work	0.64
4. Respond to pupils' queries	0.61
5. Prepare worked examples	0.59
6. Give pupils an opportunity to ask questions	0.56
7. Get the time table	0.54
8. Prepare a lesson plan	0.53
9. Establish pupil non verbal communication	0.33
10. Orient new teachers and pupils to the school	0.32

Appendix 7

KRA: Attend School and PTA Meetings

Operant Competences	Coefficient
1. Contribute opinions and suggestions	0.81
2. Participate in meeting discussions	0.73
3. Take note of issues that affect your subject area and yourself	0.69
4. Attend meetings on time	0.68
5. Pass motions	0.68
6. Make corrections to previous minutes	0.65
7. Pass minutes and agenda items	0.64
8. Meet other teachers and pupils' leaders responsible and decide on how to organise activities for the meeting	0.62
9. Source for policy on meetings	0.58

Appendix 8:
KRA: Prepare teaching and learning materials

Operant Competence	Coefficient
1. Summarise inaccessible reading materials and issue them to pupils	0.57
2. Provide reference books for the topic	0.56
3. Provide students with reference texts	0.51
4. Distribute the summary of the syllabus to students	0.50
5. Design handout to the pupils	0.44
6. Organise the meeting to be held in the school during the week	0.41
7. Get hold of and read books from the library	0.39
8. Distribute instructional materials to help pupils	0.38
9. Invite resource people to talk to pupils about sex problems	0.38
10. Design instructional materials/visual aids	0.36
11. Concentrate on the salient factors of the topic when preparing the test	0.35