

## RESEARCH and EVALUATION (PEER REVIEWED)

**Organisational citizenship behaviour and service delivery in urban local governments in Uganda**

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**Abstract**

*The quality of service delivery in decentralised local governments (LGs) in Uganda remains largely unsatisfactory, despite central government's efforts to improve resource allocation and develop supporting legal frameworks. This has been partly linked to the extent to which LG staff exhibit 'organisational citizenship behaviour' (OCB). Extant literature has not given adequate attention to OCB in the decentralisation discourse, especially in sub-national governments within developing countries such as Uganda. This paper tackles the issue of OCB among LG employees and its relationship to service delivery by addressing the following questions: (a) what is the level of OCB among LG employees and (b) to what extent do various dimensions of OCB relate to the quality of service delivery in the decentralised LG context?*

*The study is a cross-sectional survey of 165 LG staff in central Uganda. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Using content analysis and correlational analysis, the study found that OCB among LG employees is too low, and that higher levels of OCB are associated with improved service delivery. The study recommends that LGs should prioritise effective leadership and supervision, a client-centred performance culture, and empowerment of staff in order to promote OCB among employees and thereby enhance service delivery to local communities.*

**Keywords:** Service delivery, organisational citizenship behaviour, decentralised governance

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## Introduction

In the last three decades or so, there has been increasing adoption of ‘decentralisation’ as a way of managing the public sector in both developed and developing countries (Smoke 2003). All national governments, irrespective of the degree of centralisation, transfer some responsibilities to lower level units and sub-national organisations. The ‘new public management’ phenomenon, which emerged in the 1990s, emphasises two main drivers of effectiveness in public service delivery: decentralisation of power and human resource management and development (Hope 2001).

Since independence in 1962, Uganda has experienced – and continues to experience – major challenges in delivering critical services to its population. Such challenges were initially attributed to central government’s inefficiency and lack of flexibility (Tindigarukayo 1988). Therefore, when the National Resistance Movement government came to power in 1986, it favoured a process of decentralisation as a means to bring service delivery nearer to the people. In 1993, therefore, Uganda embarked on radical decentralisation to, among other goals, enhance local governance and local democracy. The major focus of the decentralisation policy was on empowering citizens to participate in decisions that affect their localities (Kiyaga-Nsubuga and Olum 2009).

Mushemeza (2019) argues that the decentralisation process is largely aimed at building democratic governance that is responsive and accountable to the public, as well as promoting capacity-building at a local level. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), however, the situation is more complex and there are several motivations for decentralisation. These include the desire to attain political legitimacy as a response by national leaders to pressures for greater participation, and the need to improve the efficiency of planning and management within the central bureaucracy. Other reasons are also cited: a failure by many government ministries and departments to adequately respond to pressing socio-economic problems; promoting the development of political skills essential for national leadership; creation of a responsive government; and improvements in service provision.

According to Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), approaches to decentralisation in Uganda fall into three broad categories:

- a) Political decentralisation (viz. granting powers and autonomy to elected local and/or regional governments) – which leads to greater democratisation, equality, stability and unity;
- b) Personnel (administrative) decentralisation (viz. ceding powers to the local governments (LGs) through Uganda’s District Service Commissions (DSCs) to appoint, discipline, and remove staff executing decentralised functions) – which leads to a more responsive or efficient and effective local government, improved public sector performance and a leaner and well-motivated public service (Maksym and Shah 2014; Nabaho 2013; Cheema and Rondinelli 1983).

- c) Financial decentralisation (viz. providing adequate levels of revenues either raised locally or transferred from the central government, and granting powers to make decisions about expenditure) – which leads to increased tax and non-tax revenues, improved resource utilisation, and greater transparency and accountability.

LGs play a crucial role in providing public goods and services that are specific to their localities (Ibrahim et al. 2013). The Uganda government actualised decentralisation by passing the Local Government Act 1997. However, the Act mainly emphasised devolving powers for decision-making and resource allocation. Human resource factors such as rewards, motivation and performance enhancement systems received limited attention except in the area of training, an omission which has subsequently been deemed to have led to outcomes that are both inadequate and ineffective. Consequently, the issue of ‘organisational citizenship behaviour’ (OCB) – the behavioural attributes of individuals that contribute to organisational effectiveness – which is a central prerequisite for good service delivery, has not received adequate attention. Partly as a result of this, the Ugandan public continues to receive poor services in most sectors including health, education, and other infrastructural areas such as roads (Turyasingura and Mudozi 2004).

This study assessed the level of OCB among LG employees and sought to determine the extent to which different OCB dimensions are associated with the quality of delivery of social services in the decentralised LG context. The paper is organised as follows: firstly, a brief literature review and an explanation of the research methodology, followed by the presentation and discussion of the study’s findings, and finally some concluding thoughts and recommendations.

## **Literature review**

This section presents the concept of OCB, tracing its origins and highlighting its various dimensions; discusses service delivery from the marketing perspective and delineates its dimensions as applied in this paper; and outlines previous research on the relationship between OCB and service delivery.

### ***Definitions of organisational citizenship behaviour***

The concept of OCB refers to the behavioural attributes of individuals which contribute to organisational effectiveness. OCB has the potential to impact on organisations’ capacity to be innovative, productive and responsive (Podsakoff et al. 2014). The term OCB, as coined by Organ (1988), refers to the behaviour exhibited when employees ‘*go an extra mile*’ in the performance of their duties without those extra efforts needing to be recognised by the reward system. In organisational studies literature, OCB is commonly referred to as the behaviour that supports organisational functioning beyond the call of duty (Organ et al. 2006).

In an effective organisation, employees commonly go beyond their formal job responsibilities (‘*in-role*’) to perform non-mandatory (‘*extra-role*’) tasks with no expectation of additional recognition or

compensation (Kim et al. 2020). Decentralised LGs, like any organisation, will benefit by elevating employees' OCB as a means of promoting better service delivery. This will involve the establishment of OCB-encouraging environments in which facilitators of OCB will be intensified and barriers reduced (Oplatka 2006). However, while OCB has been studied in both private and public sector organisations in countries around the globe (DiPaola and Mendes da Costa Neves, 2009) there is a paucity of OCB studies in LG, especially in relation to service delivery in developing countries.

According to DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001), academic recognition of organisational citizenship can be traced back to the 1930s when Barnard (1938) stated that the willingness of individuals to contribute cooperative efforts to their organisation was indispensable to its performance. This was followed by Katz and Kahn (1976) who pointed out that *extra-role* behaviours improve the effectiveness of organisations. Organ (1988, p. 4) defined “*OCB as individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organisation*”.

In the same vein, a series of studies from Katz and Kahn (1976) down to DiPaola and Mendes da Costa Neves (2009) postulate that in order for an organisation to survive, employees have to display three types of behaviours: they have to join and stay within the system; they have to be dependable as they perform their roles within the system; and they have to demonstrate innovative and spontaneous behaviours (and perform) beyond role requirements for accomplishment of organisational functions. This means that members of successful organisations not only meet expectations but also exceed them. They tend to accept reasonable inconvenience without complaint, readily provide useful suggestions, assist co-workers and significantly contribute to the success of the organisation.

Organ (1988) devised a multi-faceted scale for the OCB construct. The scale consists of five dimensions:

- a) *Altruism*: A behaviour that is directed towards other individuals, but contributes to group efficiency by enhancing individuals' performance; for example employees help new colleagues or co-workers and give freely their time to assist others.
- b) *Conscientiousness*: An employee performing his or her assigned tasks (*in-role* behaviour) in a manner above what is expected.
- c) *Sportsmanship*: Stressing the positive aspects of the organisation instead of negativity. It could also refer to an increase in the amount of time spent on organisational endeavours, and less time spent on whining, complaining and carping.
- d) *Courtesy*: Prevents problems and facilitates constructive use of time; for example participants give advance notice to supervisors and team members if they are likely to be absent.

- e) *Civic virtue*: Promotes the interests of the organisation broadly; this employee behaviour reflects his/her consideration of the organisation's sustainability in the future.

Williams (1988) provides a complementary two-dimensional definition of OCB: 'OCB-I', behaviours that immediately benefit particular individuals and contribute in that way to the organisation; and 'OCB-O', behaviours that directly benefit the organisation as a whole.

By contrast, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) present OCB as a one-dimensional construct. They do not separate benefit to individual and benefit to organisation, arguing that benefit to the individual directly translates into a benefit to the organisation and vice versa.

From another perspective, Graham (1991) contends that what are considered *in-role* or *extra-role* behaviours may vary over time. She defines OCB from a standpoint of civic or political citizenship, claiming it to be non-mandated, based on individual initiative that contributes to the best interests of the organisation. In a sense, it is a helping behaviour, characterised by going beyond specific job duties as and when necessary (Hakim et al. 2014; Stamper and Dyane 2003).

In summary, there is broad agreement that OCB is voluntary, unrewarded and may benefit both the individual and the organisation in the long run.

### ***Service delivery dimensions***

Most literature on service delivery has tended to focus on the marketing domain. Kotler (2000) argued that 'service' is an activity that involves the intangible element of an interaction between the service provider and the consumer where there is no transfer of ownership. He identifies five attributes of excellent service provision. They include:

- a) *The strategic concept*: service providers have an understanding of what the customer needs and wants, and therefore adopt strategies to satisfy the customer and to gain customer loyalty.
- b) *The commitment of top management*: the focus of top management at any organisation should not be solely on financial results but also on the commitment to delivering excellent service to clients.
- c) *The establishment of operating procedures* aimed at delivering excellent service to clients.
- d) *A service monitoring system* that is capable of tracking service delivery levels compared to competitors' service delivery and of measuring client satisfaction.
- e) *A complaints handling system* that is capable of handling both internal complaints from employees and external complaints from clients as and when they arise.

In one of the seminal papers, Shostack (1977) argued that employees themselves are often perceived by clients as 'the service'. If this assertion is true, then employees' behaviour at work constitutes a core pillar of the service delivery system. This puts employee attitudes at the forefront in the process of

delivering a service. From the standpoint of the client, the employee's behaviour is a manifestation of the organisation's service delivery performance as a whole.

Various models have emerged from the literature on how to measure private sector service effectiveness (eg Parasuraman et al. 1988; Teas 1993); but this has not been the case for the public service. For instance, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a service quality instrument which they called 'SERVQUAL' and which measured five dimensions of service delivery: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. Although the extent to which this model may be applied in the public sector context is debatable (Rodriguez et al. 2009), some of the dimensions can be customised to public services.

Based on the SERVQUAL principle and extensive literature, Rodriguez et al. (2009) developed a ten-dimensional tool for public service effectiveness. The dimensions are accessibility to the service, communication to the public, understandable administrative systems, flexibility and speedy reply, service receptivity, competence of staff delivering the service, politeness and kindness, service credibility, service reliability and service supply security.

The authors of the current study applied a four-dimensional tool developed by Turyasingura (2010) that combines some aspects of SERVQUAL and Rodriguez et al.'s (2009) ten dimensions of service effectiveness, in order to assess the effectiveness of service delivery in the Ugandan public sector. These dimensions are:

- a) *Responsiveness*. This refers to the willingness and readiness of public sector officials to provide the service to citizens, including their ability to respond to public enquiries and provide feedback. It also relates to the sense of responsibility and motivation of an employee to deliver excellent service to their clients.
- b) *Accessibility*. This involves ease of contact with front-line staff, ie those who directly interface with clients, as well as the convenience of office locations.
- c) *Professionalism*. This takes into account equity in service delivery – equal and fair treatment of all citizens in the process of delivering public services. It also involves trustworthiness and honesty, and putting citizens' needs at the centre of public service operations.
- d) *Reliability*. This focuses on maintaining citizens' trust and confidence in the public service, and the capability of the service provider to deliver on service promises. The service provided must therefore be consistent and dependable.

### **OCB and service delivery**

A number of studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between OCB and service delivery. Bienstock et al. (2003) found that positive employee perceptions of how they are treated by the service organisation, i.e. what organisational rights they receive, are associated with OCB.

Furthermore, they demonstrated that these behaviours result in more effective service delivery, higher organisational standards and enhanced customer perceptions of service quality. Yoon and Suh (2003), in a study conducted on travel agents in South Korea, concluded that there was a positive influence of OCB on service quality. Hui et al. (2001) also found a significant positive relationship in their research on bank tellers, while Castro et al. (2004) reported the same result for financial institutions in Spain. In another study, Liao (2015) confirmed that employees' OCB and service innovativeness are associated with improved performance in the e-services sector.

However, there is a paucity of research conducted on OCB and service delivery in a decentralised context and in the African cultural setting. It is against this background that this study empirically assesses the level of OCB of public sector employees in decentralised LGs in Uganda and examines the relationship between OCB dimensions and service delivery. To achieve these objectives, the following research questions were developed.

***RQ1: What is the level of OCB among public sector employees in the decentralised LGs?***

***RQ2: Is there a relationship between OCB and service delivery in decentralised LGs?***

## **Methodology**

A cross-sectional survey design in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected was adopted. The respondents were employees from three out of the five urban divisions of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). Although KCCA is administered under the Office of the President with a cabinet minister responsible in accordance with the Kampala Capital City Act 2010, it is also regulated by the Local Government Act 1997. The study applied the five-dimensional scale of OCB as proposed by Organ (1988) to assess OCB's relationship with service delivery in LGs.

A 26-item instrument was designed based on the variables of the study. In order to avoid neutral responses, since all respondents were employees of city divisions and therefore knowledgeable about LG operations, a six-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree and 6 = Strongly Agree) was adopted. Fourteen items sought responses on the OCB dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue). The other 12 items focused on service delivery dimensions (responsiveness, reliability, professionalism, and accessibility). The instrument was assessed for its reliability using Cronbach's alpha, with results of  $\alpha = 0.82$  and  $\alpha = 0.76$  for OCB and service delivery respectively, both well above the 0.70 recommended in social science research (Nunnally 1978). A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed and 165 were returned in a usable form. This constituted a response rate of 59%. Out of 165 respondents, 26 (15.7%) were from the works department, 29 (17.5%) from the finance department, 41 (24.8%) from the education department and 69 (41.8%) from the production department. Key informant (KI) interviews

were also conducted with six local councillors to get their views on the level of employee OCB, and service delivery levels, in their local council divisions.

## Results and discussion

Respondents were drawn from three LG divisions of KCCA. Male respondents constituted the majority ( $n = 94$ , 57%) compared to female respondents ( $n = 71$ , 43%). In terms of age distribution, the majority of the respondents (62%) were aged 25–34 years, 23% were 35–45, while 15% were above 45 years.

### ***Research question 1: What is the level of OCB among public sector employees in decentralised LGs?***

To answer this question, the questionnaires were analysed and cross-checked against the findings from KI interviews. Fourteen questions (three for altruism, four for conscientiousness, three for sportsmanship, two for courtesy, and two for civic virtue) were used to assess the level of OCB. Table 1 summarises these results of OCB dimensions from the primary data.

On the dimension of *altruism* (behaviour that is directed towards other individuals and contributes toward group efficiency), the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed across all three items: 73% disagreed that employees help others with work when their colleagues are absent; 72% disagreed that they take the initiative to orient new staff in the department; and 77% disagreed that they help their colleagues with any increased workload. Thus only a minority agreed that there exists a behaviour of individual contribution to group efficiency. In the case of *conscientiousness* (performance beyond expectation in assigned tasks), the results are broadly similar to those for the altruism dimension: 64% disagreed that employees were most of the time punctual for work; 36% felt that employees took undeserved breaks; 33% agreed that they also routinely take unnecessary time off duty; and 71% felt that employees never handle client enquiries during employees' personal time.

Taken together, these findings point to a level of OCB that appears unfavourable for quality service delivery to flourish. The results were corroborated by responses from KIs, who asserted that most LG employees seem to have limited attachment to their employer (KCCA in particular and government in general) and do not 'go an extra mile' to assist the public. One KI noted: "*What you are talking about [OCB] is the ideal situation which cannot be tenable in our LG [setting] given the level of employee motivation currently.*" Another respondent quipped: "*It is a common occurrence for staff to leave clients on their desks [sic] without attending to them.*" The respondent, who was a local councillor representing one of the LG divisions, further lamented that "*...our people are now used to such kind of treatment*".

The finding on absenteeism is not surprising. One KI reported that: "*It is a common practice to find empty desks on Friday afternoons and [on] Monday mornings.*" Another added that: "*Several staff in the Division have more than one household, one in the village, and the other in the city; on Friday afternoons, most of them travel to their village households and return Monday [in the] afternoon.*" As



a result, most clients seeking services on those particular days are not attended to, and the local community is aware that it is tantamount to a waste of time to seek services from LG offices on certain days of the week, thereby raising endless client complaints about poor service delivery.

*Table 1: Levels of OCB among LG employees*

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Slightly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Altruism</b>												
Employees help colleagues with their work when they are absent	39	24	44	27	37	22	28	17	13	8	4	2
Employees take initiative to orient new staff to the department although it is not in their job description	41	25	47	28	32	19	28	17	8	5	9	5
Employees help colleagues when their workload increases	42	25	41	25	44	27	30	18	5	3	3	2
<b>Conscientiousness</b>												
Employees exhibit punctuality on arriving for morning and after regular breaks	32	19	42	25	33	20	35	21	12	7	11	7
Employees rarely take undeserved breaks	23	14	49	30	33	20	38	23	12	7	10	6
Employees normally take unnecessary time off	29	18	42	25	39	24	29	18	17	10	9	5
Employees handle client enquiries during their personal time	28	17	46	28	43	26	30	18	10	6	8	5
<b>Sportsmanship</b>												
Employees volunteer to do things not required by the job but which contribute to the performance of the LG	38	23	38	23	37	22	33	20	15	9	4	2
Employees sometimes work beyond normal working hours including Saturdays without expecting any extra reward	39	24	37	22	45	27	36	22	4	2	4	2
Employees volunteer to participate in project task forces	40	24	38	23	35	21	32	19	13	8	7	4
<b>Courtesy</b>												
Employees willingly attend functions/responsibilities not required by the organisation but which help in building the overall image of the organisation	35	21	41	25	41	25	31	19	7	4	10	6
Employees give advance notice to supervisors if they are unable to work	23	14	51	31	32	19	31	19	18	11	10	6
<b>Civic virtue</b>												
Employees provide suggestions to improve the overall performance of the organisation	32	19	41	25	46	28	29	18	11	7	6	4
Employees do not waste organisational resources on unnecessary activities	34	21	39	24	37	22	29	18	18	11	8	5

Responses on the *sportsmanship* dimension assess voluntarism and employees' attitudes – ie whether of positivity or negativity. Of the respondents, 68% disagreed that employees volunteer to do things not required by their job; 73% disagreed that they work beyond normal working hours including over the weekends without expecting a reward; and only 31% agreed that they volunteer to participate in projects and task forces. With respect to *courtesy*, 71% disagreed that they willingly attend functions or shoulder responsibilities not required by the organisation, even though such roles build the image of the LG; and 64% disagreed that employees give advance notice to their supervisors when they are unable to work. In fact, most LG staff would prefer all-week seminars and workshops to attending to their daily office work. One KI confirmed this by stating that: “*Most workshops come with some incentives such as per diem and transport refund, and the majority of our employees are tempted to attend to benefit from such incentives.*” Interestingly, this seems to be a mentality that has slowly become the norm in the public service domain: whether such an attitude is perpetuated by the desire to supplement employees' incomes with allowances, or has become a matter of conforming with group behaviour, would be a valuable subject of further research.

Overall, the findings on the *sportsmanship* and *courtesy* dimensions suggest that employees in the surveyed divisions exhibit only lukewarm interest in building the image of their organisation, and little commitment to their employer – again indicating a low level of OCB. Results were no different on the *civic virtue* dimension of OCB. Responding to whether they provide suggestions to improve the performance of the organisation, an overwhelming 72% disagreed; while 67% disagreed that employees do not waste organisational resources on unnecessary activities.

All the above results reveal a low level of OCB within the LG divisions of KCCA.

***Research question 2: Is there a relationship between OCB and service delivery in decentralised LGs?***

A two-step approach was employed in a bid to answer this research question.

*Step 1: Generating and interpreting descriptive statistics of the dependent variable (service delivery).*

Questionnaire responses on the 12 items that make up the service delivery dimensions of *responsiveness*, *accessibility*, *professionalism* and *reliability* are presented in Table 2.

On *responsiveness* (the degree to which employees are ready to provide a service) 72% of respondents disagreed that they immediately respond to enquiries; 75% disagreed that they give feedback on time; and 71% disagreed that they are always at the service of the public during working hours. A similar picture emerged when considering the responses to the questions on *accessibility*: only 29% agreed that office telephones are functional most of the time and only 23% agreed that the waiting time clients spend at their offices is acceptable. However, 63% agreed that LG offices were in convenient locations. Regarding *professionalism*, 74% disagreed that clients are treated equally; only 47% agreed that the primary purpose of their job is to serve the public; and 60% disagreed that clients have confidence and

trust in the services LGs deliver. In terms of service *reliability*, 72% disagreed that services were delivered as promised in LG work plans; 51% disagreed that services are consistent from one parish to another; and 71% could not vouch that the image of their LG had improved as a result of the services delivered.

Table 2: Responses to questions on service delivery in LGs

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Slightly agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Responsiveness</b>												
I respond to clients' enquiries immediately	25	15	53	32	42	25	23	14	20	12	2	1
I give feedback to our clients on time, all the time	33	20	48	29	43	26	24	15	12	7	5	3
I am always at the service of the public during working hours	49	30	35	21	33	20	29	18	15	9	4	2
<b>Accessibility</b>												
Our phone lines are operational most of the time	61	37	31	19	25	15	25	15	15	9	8	5
The service time to our clients is acceptable	71	43	27	16	28	17	15	9	10	6	14	8
Our LG division offices are conveniently located	26	16	20	12	15	9	46	28	49	30	9	5
<b>Professionalism</b>												
All our clients are treated equally in our interactions with them	74	45	25	15	23	14	18	11	17	10	8	5
I believe that the purpose of my job is first and foremost to serve the public	25	15	29	18	33	20	19	12	45	27	14	8
The clients have confidence and trust in the services we deliver	49	30	25	15	25	15	27	16	24	15	15	9
<b>Reliability</b>												
We deliver what we promise in our quarterly and annual work plans	85	52	21	13	12	7	13	8	18	11	16	10
Our services are consistent from one parish (administrative unit) to another	25	15	28	17	32	19	41	25	28	17	11	7
The image of our LG division has improved due to the services we render to the public	56	34	42	25	20	12	22	13	13	8	12	7

Put together, the picture painted on service delivery by LGs in KCCA is not rosy. Concurring with this view, one KI remarked that, for example: *"The people find it more convenient and fulfilling to visit private health facilities compared to health centres managed by the LG."* This assertion is consistent with Ibrahim et al.'s (2013) postulation that LGs in Uganda have become a subject of intense criticism due to poor service delivery.

#### Step 2: Conducting correlational analysis

This study collected data using a survey instrument targeting employees of LGs using the Likert scale. The type of data collected is ordinal in nature and can be analysed using non-parametric methods (Murray 2013). Applying the statistical package SPSS version 20, an ordinal correlation analysis using

Spearman's Rho on summed scores of the Likert scale data was conducted in order to determine the relationship between OCB and service delivery in the LG setting. Table 3 below shows the results.

*Table 3: Results of the correlation analysis*

OCB dimensions	Service delivery dimensions			
	Responsiveness	Accessibility	Professionalism	Reliability
Altruism	.320*	.069	.359*	.109
Conscientiousness	.498**	.434*	.442*	.416*
Sportsmanship	.656**	.634*	.220	.743**
Courtesy	.653**	.463**	.674**	-.197
Civic virtue	.338*	.110	.214	.220*

\* Spearman's Rho significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Spearman's Rho significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation results of the OCB and service delivery dimensions varied considerably. Altruism had a significant although weak relationship with responsiveness ( $r = .320$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which implies that elevated levels of altruism are associated with some level of improved responsiveness to clients' needs, and the reverse is also true. This may be explained by the fact that altruism is linked to promoting both group efficiency and *in-role* positive behaviours, which are critical in enhancing group cohesion and responsiveness. However, altruism did not have a significant relationship with accessibility of services, possibly because the focus is largely on internal clients, ie individuals within the organisation. In terms of professionalism, altruism showed a positive relationship ( $r = .359$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), implying that if there is a higher level of altruism, there is likely to be a corresponding improvement in the level of professionalism exhibited by LG staff. One possible explanation is that the values espoused by professionals tend to make them more altruistic in attitude. There was no significant relationship between altruism and reliability of service delivery in the LGs.

Conscientiousness revealed moderate relationships on all the service delivery dimensions, namely: responsiveness ( $r = .498$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), accessibility ( $r = .434$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), professionalism ( $r = .442$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and reliability ( $r = .416$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These correlations are not surprising because conscientiousness represents behaviours that are associated with serving clients beyond their expectations. Employees who exhibit higher levels of conscientiousness tend to be more punctual at work, more willing to handle client needs in their personal time, and less likely to take unnecessary breaks from work. These key attributes directly contribute to employees' responsiveness to client needs: by being present and willing they achieve higher levels of accessibility, in addition to being seen as professional and reliable.

Sportsmanship was also correlated with all four service delivery dimensions. The results offer a very illuminating picture. Out of the four service delivery dimensions, sportsmanship posted three strong relationships, namely responsiveness ( $r = .656$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); accessibility ( $r = .634$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); and reliability ( $r = .743$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Only professionalism produced a non-significant – though positive – relationship

( $r = .220$ ). The academic literature suggests that sportsmanship is associated with the volunteer spirit, a focus on promoting the image of the organisation rather than complaining, serving beyond expectations and participating in project task forces. These behaviours are linked to high levels of responsiveness and accessibility, whereby staff will do whatever it takes to be responsive to the needs of their clients. If employees promote positive aspects of their organisation, minimise complaints and work beyond expectations, then they improve service reliability, and clients can go to the LG expecting appropriate attention in terms of services sought.

Courtesy is associated with behaviours that promote effective use of time – giving advance notice to a supervisor if someone is not going to be available for work, offering timely reminders and providing appropriate information (Organ 1988). Courtesy presented positive and significant relationships with three service delivery dimensions: responsiveness ( $r = .653$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); accessibility ( $r = .463$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and professionalism ( $r = .674$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There was a surprising negative – albeit non-significant – relationship with reliability ( $r = -.197$ ). In keeping with OCB values, high levels of courtesy are likely to improve levels of responsiveness and accessibility because, if an employee is absent, there is adequate notice given to the supervisor so that an appropriate replacement or contingency plan is put in place. Similarly, it is possible to link courteous behaviour to professionalism, because professional conduct includes availability for service and providing appropriate information.

The fifth and last OCB dimension is civic virtue. It presented only two statistically significant and relatively weak relationships, namely with responsiveness ( $r = .338$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and reliability ( $r = .220$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Relationships with accessibility and professionalism were slightly positive but statistically non-significant. These results are revealing but on reflection not surprising. Civic virtue behaviours are associated with promoting organisational sustainability, giving a high priority to the interests of the organisation, and using organisational resources appropriately. In theory, a high level of civic virtue should be associated with improved levels of responsiveness due to the fact that employees would be aware that it is through their efforts that the organisation can sustain its service to community. The weak relationships between civic virtue and responsiveness and professionalism imply that, in a LG setting, employees' priorities may be geared not so much towards the sustainability of the LG – as the literature suggests – but rather simply to doing the job at hand; and sometimes their interests tend to override those of the organisation. This is reflected in the views of one supervisor who lamented that: “... *For the time I have been in office, I have noticed a growing trend of LG staff focusing on their own interests rather than those of the LG division which employs them.*” The situation is not helped by the fact that some cadres of LG staff may be frequently transferred between LG divisions, which implies that they do not develop long-standing attachments to their roles and relationships.

Overall, it is evident that OCB dimensions have a consistent positive and significant relationship with the service delivery dimension of responsiveness, and that the majority of OCB dimensions have a

positive significant relationship with service delivery as a whole in an LG setting. This implies that the higher the level of OCB exhibited by LG employees, the better the quality of service delivery to clients. If LGs need to strengthen service delivery, then the employees' OCB needs to be elevated to a desired level. These findings support LePine et al.'s (2002) assertion that OCB is a key factor for individual and organisational performance. They are also consistent with demonstrated OCB outcomes in the private sector that showed the positive influence of OCB on service quality (Liao 2015; Yoon and Suh 2003; Hui et al. 2001). This positive influence is the result of a number of factors, but appears to be mainly due to the fact that OCB has the potential to create a more favourable working environment (Ibrahim et al. 2013). Consequently, OCB accentuates the performance attributes needed to promote effectiveness in organisations.

The picture painted by these findings is as interesting as it is intriguing. At its inception as an authority in 2010, KCCA revised staff salaries upwards considerably in relation to other government employees. But as the results show, low levels of OCB are persistent, and service delivery complaints are on the rise. This trend casts doubt in the argument that financially stable employees would tend to exhibit higher levels of OCB. At the same time, it lends credence to the hypothesis that OCB is characterised by employees' *unrewarded* extra efforts to promote organisational effectiveness.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study point to a likely low level of OCB for employees of LGs across Uganda, and indicate that improving OCB is essential to spur not only individual but also organisational performance and thus lift the quality of services. While the study was conducted in an urban LG setting governed by both the Local Government Act 1997 and the KCCA Act 2010, the authors believe that similar research in a rural LG would have similar findings.

Given the vital role of LGs in providing essential local services to communities, the importance of OCB cannot be over-emphasised. As the literature suggests, high levels of OCB have the potential to accelerate development outcomes, locally and nationally. Therefore, to realise the potential gains of decentralisation, LGs should go beyond focusing on resource mobilisation and indicative capacity-building, important though these are, to creating a working environment in which OCB can flourish. This working environment needs to include among other things more effective leadership and supervision; promotion of a culture of client-centred performance; and empowerment of LG staff.

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