

# **New Models of Work Performance and Their Implications for Employment Relations**

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## **Abstract**

Employee performance is a central variable in employment relations but until recently has received little attention (Austin & Villanova, 1992). Performance has often been confused with activities over which employees have little control such as productivity and output when it is better understood as referring to the behaviours which employees display which are valued by their organisation (Campbell, McHenry, & Wise, 1990). Most research on performance has focused on variables relevant to particular occupations rather than identifying broad dimensions of performance which would allow for greater generalisability of results and cross-level inferences to be made. Several general models of performance are reviewed in this article and evidence is presented which supports a two-factor model based on task and citizenship performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001). Task performance has traditionally been recognised within research and employment relations practice, but the value of citizenship performance has been relatively neglected. Citizenship performance appears to contribute as much as task performance to overall ratings of performance, and has substantial causal impacts on organisational outcomes such as customer satisfaction and profitability. The practical and theoretical importance of citizenship performance is reviewed and recommendations for employment relations practice and research are provided.

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Individual employee performance has been a central variable in much research in employment relations (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000; Viswesvaran, Ones, & Schmidt, 1996) but as a construct has until recently received comparatively little attention when compared with other relevant variables (Austin & Villanova, 1992). In part this has been because of an emphasis on wider systemic issues in attempting to understand organisational performance (Addison & Belfield, 2001; Michie & Sheehan-Quinn, 2001), but possibly it is also because researchers tend to emphasise independent variables, and the measurement of performance as a variable tends to be controlled by people other than the researcher (Campbell, McCloy, Opler, & Sager, 1993).

One of the consequences of this neglect has been that the concept of performance has often been operationalised by measures over which an individual has limited control (eg productivity and efficiency confound organisational constraints) and that therefore confuse the relationship between predictor variables and criteria (Campbell et al., 1993). Output is one example of a measure which has been used for individual performance but which is in fact a reflection

of many factors apart from the individual worker's efforts such as the work environment, availability and standard of equipment and resources, support provided and other systemic issues as pointed out by the Total Quality Management literature (Waldman, 1994a, 1994b). Performance can be distinguished from such measures because it refers to the behaviours which an individual displays whereas concepts like output and effectiveness reflect the outcomes of those behaviours, which may or may not be within the control of the individual (Campbell, McHenry, & Wise, 1990).

In the past ten years or so more attention has been paid to the definition and exploration of work performance at least from the perspective of organisational behaviour research. Much of this work has been either directed or inspired by the United States Army Selection and Classification Project overseen by John Campbell and his colleagues (Campbell, 1990, 1999; Campbell, Gasser, & Oswald, 1996; Campbell et al., 1993; Campbell et al., 1990). From their perspective individual performance is seen as actual behaviour that can be scaled and measured in terms of proficiency, rather than the outcomes which the employing organisation derives from that performance, a definition which avoids the construct confusion referred to previously (Campbell et al., 1993). Thus job performance includes work behaviours which are: relevant to organisational goals; within the individual's control; and measurable ie observable, scorable etc (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

The measurement of job performance is also complicated by the fact that what counts for job performance is itself complex, changes over time and situation, and consists of multiple dimensions (Hough & Oswald, 2001). In whatever way it is defined job performance remains an abstract concept which is socially constructed, and there are many judgement calls required when it is being operationalised even when it relies on apparently 'objective' measures such as behavioural counting, organisational records and the like (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

### **Models of Performance**

In response to this complexity researchers have adopted a range of approaches for dealing with the complexity of job performance. In a review of models of job performance Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) used ideas developed by Binning and Barrett (1989) to analyse the approaches for handling the complexity of performance used by various writers. For these writers performance dimensions have been either designed for specific jobs or related to work generally, and have been either developed as stand-alone measures or as a set of dimensions intended to cover a large proportion of the total performance variance of employees. Stand-alone measures for specific jobs are exceedingly numerous and this represents one of the difficulties in understanding performance generally; what is considered a central aspect of performance in one line of work can be totally ignored in another because of the requirements of individual jobs or occupations. This can be a problem even when more comprehensive sets of dimensions are used. Although clearly useful within their context, it is difficult for example to generalise from entry-level performance criteria (Hunt, 1996) to managerial performance measures (Borman & Brush, 1993) and vice-versa.

This lack of comparability of performance dimensions from one occupation to another is not a problem if there is no need to generalise to other positions, such as when job incumbents remain in similar positions and thus there is no need to predict their performance in a new setting, or when researchers and practitioners are uninterested in making connections between individual and organisational performance. Yet the nature of work has been changing over the last few decades with a move towards more flexible definitions of work roles to accommodate more dynamic and interchangeable jobs, as well as cross-functional tasks and skills in response to the increasing rate of change in economic and organisational conditions (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Cascio, 1995; Hough & Oswald, 2001). These changes have required more ability to generalise performance from occupation to occupation. Research on the links be-

tween employment relations practices and overall firm performance (Addison & Belfield, 2001; Michie & Sheehan-Quinn, 2001; Ramsay, Scholarios, & Harley, 2000) would likewise benefit from models of performance which allow generalisations from individual to organisational levels of analysis, something which necessitates more general models of individual performance.

Fortunately Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) also highlighted a growing number of studies aimed at developing more widely applicable models of performance which address these needs for generalisability of findings and cross-level analyses of performance. Two of the more comprehensive models are those presented by Campbell et al (1996) and Viswesvaran et al (1996). The Campbell et al model is based on a review of the job performance literature and extensive confirmatory research conducted in United States military settings. On the basis of this research they settled on eight components of job performance which are:

- Job-Specific Task Proficiency
- Non-Job-Specific Task Proficiency
- Written And Oral Communication Task Proficiency
- Demonstration Of Effort
- Maintenance Of Personal Discipline
- Facilitation Of Peer And Team Performance
- Supervision/Leadership
- Management/Administration

Campbell et al (1996) explicitly deny that these represent orthogonal factors of job performance and state that they are not necessarily present in every job and are definitely not the last word in defining the performance domain. However they do suggest that these components account for most of the variation in performance assessments. They also present evidence that suggests that the various components are relatively independent and are relevant for performance research.

The Viswesvaran et al (1996) model is derived from an application of the lexical hypothesis (Goldberg, 1990) which suggests that all practically significant variation in performance will have been identified and labelled at some point by someone in the employment relations or organisational behaviour literature. Their ten dimensions of performance were identified using content analysis and conceptual grouping and are as follows:

- Productivity
- Effort
- Job Knowledge
- Interpersonal competence
- Administrative competence
- Quality
- Communication competence
- Leadership
- Compliance with authority
- Overall performance

There are significant differences between these lists: Productivity and Quality for example appear on the Viswesvaran et al list but not among the Campbell et al dimensions, whereas there seems to be no equivalent for Non-Job-Specific Task Proficiency in the Viswesvaran et al list. However the overlap between the lists is substantial. On the down-side these categorisations, because of their extensiveness, include variables some of which are not present in all positions ie their structure may be sufficient in a general sense for describing the broad range of job performance, but not necessary (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994), consequently adding needless levels of complexity when searching for a general understanding of performance.

These models have something else in common in that they both appear to reflect broader and more fundamental structures of performance. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) observed that one general factor accounted for over 50% of variance across the different dimensions: a *p* factor analogous to the *g* factor of intelligence (Arvey & Murphy, 1998). Although it is often necessary to form such a composite of performance measures for various personnel purposes, and while it is too complex to use every possible criterion measure separately, general dimensions derived from statistical techniques have not proved to be theoretically satisfying (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994) and are contrary to the observed multi-dimensional nature of performance (Borman, Hanson, & Hedge, 1997). Campbell et al (1996) concluded from their research that there were at least two general factors or major types of job performance: aspects which are 'job-specific' and reflect technical and specific competencies, and 'non-job-specific' aspects which are considered to be broadly similar for every job. Each category was conceived as being multi-dimensional with the latter category including things such as teamwork, self-development, compliance with organisational norms and customs, perseverance etc (Campbell et al., 1990).

### **Task and Citizenship Performance**

These two factors are similar to the factors proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and further developed by Borman, Penner, Allen and Motowidlo (2001) who developed a model based on two types of performance – task or technical performance and contextual or citizenship performance. Their distinction is somewhat reminiscent of the venerable distinction between task and maintenance processes in group research. Technical or task performance relates to what Borman and Motowidlo (1993) call the 'technical core' of the organisation or job, the activities directly or indirectly involved with transforming resources into products for economic exchange. Technical or task activities vary considerably from job to job and include two types of behaviours: transformation of raw materials into goods and services produced by the organisation eg selling, machine operation, teaching, counter-service etc; and activities which support the core eg supply, planning & coordination, maintenance, development. That is to say that task performance is either directly related to the technical core or it services the requirements of the technical core (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Technical or task activities are dependent on knowledge, skills and abilities, and are role-prescribed. These activities are commonly included within formal job descriptions and are what is focused upon by most traditional forms of job analysis. Task performance is therefore the degree to which employees demonstrate proficiency in activities which are formally recognised and which contribute to the organisation's technical core either directly or indirectly (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

Many activities are not included within the ambit of these task activities but have a substantial impact on organisational effectiveness. Contextual or citizenship performance involves activities directed at maintaining the interpersonal and psychological environment that needs to exist to allow the technical or task core to operate. As such citizenship activities are common to most if not all jobs, are dependent upon motivational and predispositional variables such as personality, and are rarely role-prescribed. Examples of citizenship performance are activities such as:

"Volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job  
Persisting with extra enthusiasm or effort when necessary to complete own task activities successfully  
Helping and cooperating with others  
Following organizational rules and procedures even when personally inconvenient  
Endorsing, supporting and defending organizational objectives" (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993: p 73).

Generally speaking task performance has been seen as role prescribed (Katz & Kahn, 1978) while citizenship performance has been considered discretionary. In comparison to Campbell et al's (1996) model task performance includes job-specific and non-job specific task proficiency as well as aspects of written and oral communication, supervision and leadership, as well as management and administration. Citizenship performance includes much of the behaviour which makes up Campbell et al's other dimensions (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Both Borman and Motowidlo (1997) and Campbell et al (1996) freely acknowledge the strengths of each other's models and the limitations of their own and suggest that despite their different origins these should be seen as complementary models rather than competitive ones. Contextual or citizenship activities can be distinguished from task activities in that contextual activities support the context or environment within which the technical core of the organisation must function, rather than supporting the technical core itself. The emphasis is on the initiative, support and persistence shown rather than the technical proficiency demonstrated.

Although Borman and Motowidlo (1993) originally referred to citizenship performance as contextual performance, Borman et al (2001) changed the term to reflect the concept's relationship to an earlier notion, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which was initially described as a category of performance by Smith, Organ and Near (1983). OCB was identified as reflecting one of three categories of essential employee behaviour identified by Katz (1964), namely innovative and spontaneous behaviours which are not formally directed or prescribed<sup>1</sup>. OCB has been defined as 'contributions [which are] not contractually rewarded nor practically enforceable by supervision or a job description' (Konovsky & Organ, 1996: p253); in other words they are behaviours which do not form an official part of a job-role but which are valued by the organisation nonetheless. However, although OCB's have repeatedly been identified as extra-role, both in theoretical discussions and in empirical research (Barksdale & Werner, 2001; Williams & Anderson, 1991), Organ (1997) stated that it is of little theoretical or predictive value to insist on this.

Smith et al (1983) and several other researchers (Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Shore & Wayne, 1993) conceived of OCB as having two dimensions – altruism and conscientiousness – although subsequent authors have identified as many as five sub-factors: altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, generalised compliance, and civic virtue (eg Konovsky & Organ, 1996). OCB altruism has been equated with citizenship performance towards individuals and OCB conscientiousness as citizenship performance towards the organisation generally (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Borman et al., 2001), although others have considered OCB conscientiousness to more of a motivational or attitudinal variable (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Similar dimensions have been used in research conducted under the banner of contextual performance, namely interpersonal facilitation and job dedication (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). Interpersonal facilitation refers to behaviours which contribute to organisational outcomes through interpersonal means. It includes altruism (Smith et al., 1983), helping coworkers (George & Brief, 1992) as well as a range of other behaviours which address issues such as barriers to performance, morale and cooperation (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). Job dedication is more closely linked to Smith et al's (1983) original dimension of generalised compliance which has also been labelled conscientiousness, and includes performance behaviours such as self-discipline, rule-following, and taking initiative (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996).

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly of the other two categories of essential employee behaviour identified by Katz, the first one, entering and remaining within the organisation, although a significant organisational variable would not be commonly considered a form of performance *per se*, while the second, carrying out one's role reliably, echoes Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) dimension of technical or task performance.

## **Distinguishing Task and Citizenship Performance**

Although there is a growing body of writing and research on citizenship performance under its various titles, there also remains some disquiet about whether it best to use a single dimension of individual performance or whether splitting performance into two basic factors is justified. Some writers even question the value of including citizenship activities as a performance dimension. Schmidt (1993) for example cautioned against identifying citizenship as a type of work performance because both Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Smith et al (1983) defined them to be something which is not part of the job description ie extra-role behaviour. Including it within the job description makes it cease to be 'contextual' and thus loses something which early definitions saw as central to its definition. However in a review and revision of OCB Organ (1997) stated that the emphasis on citizenship being extra-role was unnecessary and added needless conceptual confusion.

The empirical research reported by (Viswesvaran et al., 1996) and discussed earlier also raises questions about the distinction between task and citizenship performance given that a single factor accounted for so much of overall performance ratings in their meta-analysis. In a series of studies designed to address this question Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) and Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) found that not only do supervisors distinguish between task and citizenship performance, but also that the citizenship dimensions of interpersonal facilitation (OCB altruism) and job dedication (OCB conscientiousness) are significantly different components of supervisors' judgements of overall performance. A range of other researchers have also confirmed the practical and empirical significance of this theoretical distinction (Borman, White, & Dorsey, 1995; Conway, 1996; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991, 1993; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Paine, 1999; Van Scotter, Motowidlo, & Cross, 2000).

This distinction is further confirmed by the fact that task performance and citizenship performance typically correlate with different predictors. For example job experience explains a considerable amount of the variation in task performance (Borman, White, Pulakos, & Opler, 1991; Schmidt, Hunter, & Outerbridge, 1986; Schmidt, Hunter, Outerbridge, & Goff, 1988) but the relationship with citizenship performance is considerably smaller (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). In the United States Army Project A Selection and Classification project, tests of cognitive and perceptual-motor skills were best at predicting task performance measures such as job-specific and general task proficiency, whereas measures of temperament and personality provided the best prediction of citizenship measures such as giving extra effort, supporting fellow-workers, and maintaining personal discipline (McHenry, Hough, Toquam, & Hanson, 1990).

Despite this evidence of the distinctiveness of task and citizenship performance it remains a fact that the two dimensions are not entirely separate. Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) for example found that job dedication overlapped too much with task performance and interpersonal facilitation to provide separate prediction of overall performance. Conway (1999) likewise found that although his use of a multi-trait, multi-rater approach provided strong evidence for the separateness of task and citizenship performance, the distinction was more pronounced for non-managerial than managerial jobs, and there are substantial correlations between task and citizenship performance (in the range 0.5 to 0.6).

This should not be too surprising considering that both contribute substantially to overall measures of performance and that a certain amount of halo and/or common method variance is inevitable in most measures of performance (Arvey & Murphy, 1998). Considering this in the light of the other evidence presented here it seems reasonable to conclude that task and citizenship performance are related but distinct, and both should be taken into account in any attempts at understanding employee, group or organisational performance.

## **Practical Importance of Citizenship Performance**

Citizenship or contextual performance, along with OCB have been growing in importance in discussions of human resource management (Borman et al., 1997). This has been for theoretical reasons as already outlined but also because citizenship performance has been shown to have comparable influence with task performance on overall performance ratings by supervisors (Borman et al., 1995; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Van Scotter et al., 2000), an effect that becomes stronger as ratees move up the organisational hierarchy (MacKenzie et al., 1999). One study that directly estimated the relative importance of both found that task performance accounts for between 17% and 44% of overall performance whilst contextual performance accounts for between 12% and 34% among soldiers (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Citizenship performance is taken into consideration by sales managers in evaluating sales-person performance, even after taking objective measures such as sales volume into account (MacKenzie et al., 1991), which makes sense considering that citizenship performance accounts for between 15% and 43% of variance on sales, production & quality (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). In another study citizenship performance accounted for 29% of sales managers' performance ratings as opposed to 21% accounted for by objective measures (MacKenzie et al., 1999). This figure is consistent with Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) estimate that 30% of variance in descriptions of managerial performance are accounted for by citizenship performance.

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Organ (1997) proposed that citizenship performance makes an important contribution to both individual and organisational performance. Cooperative and effortful behaviour contributes to organisational effectiveness by helping when unforeseen contingencies arise, making the supervisor's job easier, and through providing general assistance to the organisation (Bateman & Organ, 1983). This provides support for the broader organisational, social and psychological environment of the organisation within which the technical core of the organisation operates (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Smith et al., 1983) and aids the accomplishment of organisational goals by facilitating communication, lubricating relationships, and reducing tensions or emotional disruptions (Arvey & Murphy, 1998) in a manner consistent with skills used for facilitating team-work (McIntyre & Salas, 1995). Although typically they are not directly or contractually rewarded (Organ & Konovsky, 1989) despite their substantial impact on performance evaluations, citizenship behaviours become increasingly important because over time because of their combined effect on organisational operations and performance (Organ, 1990; Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

There is a growing body of evidence, which supports this hypothesised link between citizenship performance and organisational effectiveness. Podsakoff and Mackenzie (1994) found that each of the dimensions of citizenship behaviour used in their study made independent contributions to a total of around 17% of unit-level performance in a group of life insurance agencies. Walz and Niehoff (cited in MacKenzie et al., 1999) in a study conducted in restaurants found that employee citizenship behaviours predicted increased operating efficiency, customer satisfaction, quality of performance and cost efficiency, and decreased food wastage and customer complaints, accounting for an average of 29% of variance on these organisational outcomes. George and Bettenhausen (1990) likewise found that unit-level citizenship behaviour accounted for a significant proportion of objective sales performance. These correlational results of course do not demonstrate causation, but Koys (2001) provided evidence that this is indeed a causal relationship. In a study using cross-lagged regression analysis within a restaurant chain, Koys observed that citizenship behaviours predicted subsequent organisational outcomes such as profitability and customer satisfaction, but not the other way around.

In summary, paying attention to citizenship performance is similar to acknowledging that

it is different to work in a group or organisation than it is to conduct apparently similar activities on one's own. Organisational requirements extend past formalised issues such as dress or procedure to the unwritten and often unspoken norms and expectations which constitute the informal organisation (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and which lead to organisational outcomes of importance to researchers and managers (Organ & Paine, 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

### **Implications for Research and Practice**

This article has described the growing recognition of the ways in which both task and citizenship performance have distinct and major impacts upon organisations, and this recognition has significant implications for both practitioners and researchers in employment relations. Task performance has by its nature been long integrated into research and practice, but citizenship performance has not often been explicitly recognised within employment relations either at the individual or more particularly at the organisational level (cf Addison & Belfield, 2001; Michie & Sheehan-Quinn, 2001; Ramsay et al., 2000).

From a practitioner perspective the major implication is that organisations in their employment relations strategies should explicitly target citizenship performance. Recruitment and selection activities have traditionally focussed upon identifying and developing useful knowledge, skills and experience which contribute directly to task performance, while training and development and much of performance management has emphasised developing and motivating task performance. The fact that citizenship performance is more easily identified using personality and attitudinal measures (McHenry et al., 1990) suggests that these should be incorporated into selection procedures. A considerable amount of research is consistent with the idea that perceived organisational support is the major variable which increases citizenship performance among existing staff (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Netemeyer, Boles, McKee, & McMurrian, 1997; Organ & Lingl, 1995). Consequently organisations should consider the support they provide to employees bearing in mind the potential benefits or costs of changes to the levels of citizenship performance which result. Performance management systems in particular need to be re-thought to, for example, ensure that while encouraging higher levels of task performance they do not simultaneously discourage citizenship performance.

A greater emphasis on citizenship performance also has implications for the conduct of research in employment relations. Like every new model it raises many new questions. Is citizenship performance always valuable within an organisation, and if not what determines whether it is valuable or not? Does a focus on citizenship performance merely cover a new form of work intensification (Ramsay et al., 2000)? To what extent should citizenship performance be directly addressed within industrial agreements through various approaches such as 'soft' HRM programs (Roan, Bramble, & Lafferty, 2001)?

This new perspective on performance also provides hints as to how to start developing models which contain cross-level linkages from individual to group to organisational performance. Most of the research on performance within organisations conducted to date has used highly specific measures when examining individual performance (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000) or relatively fuzzy and diffuse measures for organisational performance (Wood & de Menezes, 1998). Being relatively non-job-specific allows citizenship performance to fulfil an intermediary role between these levels of analysis and potentially provide a key for the development of more inclusive understandings of performance generally.



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