

## JOB ROTATION AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION: A CASE OF SMALL ICT FIRMS IN NAIROBI KENYA

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### **Abstract**

This study explored how job rotation affects employee motivation. The population of the study consisted of 90 employees who worked in small ICT firms in Nairobi. Simple random sampling was applied to select a sample size of 45 employees. A structured questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The data analysis involved descriptive statistics and also, Chi Square test which was computed to determine the relationship between job rotation and employee motivation. The results showed that there was a significant association between job rotation and employee motivation.

**Key words:** *Job Rotation, Employee Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation*

### **1. Introduction**

Dessler (2015) refers to job rotation as a training technique which entails moving a trainee from one department to another to broaden their understanding of business and to test their abilities. Noe et al. (2010) states that job rotation is the process of systematically moving a single individual from one job to another over the course of time. The job assignments may be in different functional areas of the organization or movement may be between jobs in a single functional area or department. In this study, job rotation will be defined as movement between jobs in a single functional area. This is because in small ICT firms which the study is focusing on, employees rotate between jobs as these firms do not have departments

According to Olorunsula (2000), job rotation is one career development method which is practiced in many organizations. Likewise, Mello (2015) states that job rotation has become increasingly popular in organizations in recent years as a key tool by which employees are developed through exposure to different roles and functions within an organization. This is to say that many organizations have embraced job rotation practice as technique for career development. Earny and Martins (2006) state that job rotation resulted into positive outcomes like motivation and technical skills. All the same, Grobler et.al. (2006) asserts that job rotation rarely addressed lack of employee motivation. Given this lack of concurrence on whether job rotation improves employee motivation or not, this study sought to determine the influence of job rotation on employee motivation in small IT firms in Nairobi.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Employee motivation**

Employee motivation is one of the most studied topics (Gupta, 2004). This is because finding ways to motivate employees remains a management concern to date. Scholars and practitioners care about cultivating, increasing and maintaining employee motivation (Devadass, 2011). This is because for every strategy to succeed in an organization, employee involvement and willingness to perform is required. Employee motivation is a behavioral, affective and cognitive process which influences the willingness of employees to do their work to achieve personal and organizational goals (Havold and Havold, 2018). Motivated employees are committed to their jobs and work effectively. They focus on their work and are hence productive.

Several theories which have addressed employee motivation include the expectancy theory by Vroom, ERG theory by Alderfer and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory among others. Pinder (1998) states that employee motivation is a set of internal and external forces that initiate work related behavior and determine its form, direction, intensity and duration. According to researchers, motivation can either be extrinsic or intrinsic (Hitt, Esser and Marriot 2002). Extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors like punishments and rewards which can make an employee act toward the attainment of work related tasks. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the employee. It happens when an employee finds his work fulfilling and enjoyable.

### **2.2 Job Rotation**

Noe et al. (2010) states that job rotation helps employees to gain an overall appreciation of the organization's goals, increases their understanding of different organizational functions, develops a network of contacts and improves problem solving and decision making skills. Job rotation may be beneficial to both employees and organizations. Through job rotation, an employee can get some variety of work, work place and peers. Management get employees who can perform a variety of tasks to meet organizational goals

Some of the problems of job rotation include adverse effect employees' job satisfaction and motivation due to difficulty in developing functional specialties. This may happen when the affected employees do not spend enough time in one position to get challenging assignments. All the same, job rotation has its advantages. For instance, it has been shown to be related to skill acquisition, salary growth and promotion rates. Gupta (2004) records a negative aspect of job rotation in that it may not change the nature of jobs and may frustrate employees who want challenging jobs. All the same, Adomi (2006) states that job rotation presents employees with an opportunity to learn new skills. Planned job rotation increases task variety by shifting workers among jobs involving tasks of similar difficulty and is important for training (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn 2003). Planned job rotation can provide an employee with a means of learning about various departments and therefore be able to acquire broad and varied experience in the core areas of the business which is paramount for career advancement (Wernick, 1994). Planned job rotation can aid an employee to develop a realistic picture of what he or she is good at and also what the employee is not good at and therefore make the best career moves for advancement (Dessler, 2008). This means that job rotation may help reveal an employee's strengths and weaknesses and therefore enable such an employee to make an informed decision on career paths.

Baro (2012) found that job rotation led to skill development and made the job enjoyable, thereby overcoming boredom. Based on these findings it is reasonable to argue that job rotation may have a connection with motivation since it can make the work enjoyable hence inducing intrinsic motivation. It is important to note that job rotation may also have some drawbacks. Graham and Bennet (1998) found that job rotation may disadvantage employees if they are exposed to bad training methods and consequently learn inefficient, rather than efficient methods of performance.

### **3. Methodology**

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted 90 employees who worked in small ICT firms in Nairobi. In this study, a small firm was considered to be one employing 5 to 50 workers. Simple random sampling was applied to select a sample size of 45 employees. A structured questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. Likert type scales ranging from 1 strongly disagree through 5 strongly agree were used to measure the opinions of the respondents. The data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Chi Square test was computed to determine the relationship between job rotation and employee motivation.

### **4. Findings**

The study realized a response rate of 88% meaning that out of the 45 sampled respondents there were 40 who participated. There were only five employees or 12% who did not respond.

#### **4.1 Employee Motivation**

Employee motivation was measured using four items; pride in job, enjoyment of job, doing the job effectively and willingness to do the job. The results showed that 37% of the respondents disagreed that they took pride in their jobs. Another 22.5% were neutral meaning that they did not want to reveal their standing. With regard to enjoying the job, 32.5% of the respondents disagreed so and 30% were neutral. Also, 32.5% of the respondents disagreed that they did their job effectively. Notably 35% were neutral on the same point. When asked if they did their job willingly, 35% of the employees strongly disagreed and another 20% disagreed. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Employee Motivation**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
I take pride in my job	8 (20%)	15 (37%)	9 (22.5%)	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)
I enjoy doing my job	6 (15%)	13 (32.5%)	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	5 (12.5%)
I do my job effectively	7 (17.5%)	13 (32.5%)	14 (35%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)
I do my job willingly	14 (35%)	8 (20%)	7 (17.5%)	7 (17.5%)	4 (10%)

#### 4.2 Job Rotation and Employee Motivation

The perceptions on job rotation and employee motivation were gauged on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree through 5 strongly agree. Means and Chi Square were computed to determine the effect of job rotation on employee motivation. The results are presented in Table 2.

The item on whether job rotation had enabled me to know different departments had a mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 1.357. This means that there was an agreement about this aspect. Increased experience due to job rotation had a mean of 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.383. Other opinions in agreement included knowing my strengths (mean =3.31and standard deviation =1.379) and increasing my task variety with a mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 1.377. There was a disagreement that job rotation enabled employees to know the organizational goals. The mean was 2.26 with a standard deviation of 1.391. Findings showed a disagreement that that job rotation made the job enjoyable with a mean of 2.60 with standard deviation of 1.467. Chi Square results showed that job rotation had a significant association with employee motivation,  $\chi^2=45.301$ ; *d.f.* =4; *P*= 0.000(*P*<.05).

**Table 2: Job Rotation and Employee Motivation**

Construct	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job rotation has enabled me to know organizational goals	40	1	5	2.26	1.391
Job rotation has enabled me to know the different departments in my organization	40	1	5	4.16	1.357
I have gained experience because of job rotation	40	1	5	3.56	1.383
Job rotation has increased my task variety	40	1	5	3.25	1.370
Job rotation has enabled me to know my strengths	40	1	5	3.31	1.379
Job rotation has enabled me to know my weaknesses	40	1	5	3.18	1.377
Job rotation has made my job enjoyable	40	1	5	2.60	1.467
<b>CHI SQUARE RESULTS</b>					
$\chi^2=45.301; d.f. =4; P=0.000(P<.05$					

**5. Discussion**

Findings of this study showed that job rotation enabled employees to know the different departments in the organization. The findings thus concurred with Wernick (1994) that planned job rotation can provide an employee with a means of learning about various departments and therefore be able to acquire broad and varied experience in the core areas of the business which is paramount for career advancement. The employees had also gained experience because of job rotation. This finding was in agreement with Adomi (2006) who asserts that job rotation presents employees with an opportunity to learn new skills.

Other findings were in agreement that job rotation had increased their task variety. Planned job rotation increases task variety by shifting workers among jobs involving tasks of similar difficulty and is important for training (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn 2003). Findings showed that job rotation though had not made the job enjoyable. The findings therefore refuted observations of Baro (2012) who found that job rotation led to skill development and made the job enjoyable, thereby overcoming boredom. The reason why the job rotation did not make the job enjoyable needs to be investigated further because it has implications for employee motivation. Findings showed that many respondents disagreed that they were motivated. Chi square results showed that job rotation was associated with employee motivation. This means that organizations need to pay attention to careful implementation of job rotation so that it can affect employee motivation positively.

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