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Assessing the effect of job rotation on organizational performance a case study on management trainees of unilever Ghana limited, Tema

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ABSTRACT

Job rotation is a movement of employees from one job to another within the same organization and eventually returning to the original position. Job rotation enables employees to gain additional skills, knowledge and insight about the organization, this in turn helps the organization to fill future vacancies within the organization and reduce turnover. The study accessed the impact of job rotation on organizational performance at Unilever Ghana Limited using Tema branch as a case study. Both primary and secondary data were sourced for the study. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively using descriptive analysis like charts and tables. The major findings of the study were that Unilever Company Limited, Tema has a policy on job rotation and it's been practiced. The practice of Job rotation in the Company had a moderate effect in helping the company's performance. The recommendations are that, maximum productivity can be attained when employees are adequately and properly trained and motivated and management should handle issues by identifying and correcting errors, irregularities, personal collusion, safeguarding assets and maintaining a sustainable internal control system by implementing its policy on job rotation system.

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Introduction

Background to the Study

Recent, surveys have revealed that job rotation is used by a significant and increasing number of companies in the United States (Osterman, 2000). Companies have been using job rotation, as a systematic movement of employees from job to job within an organization for some years, as a way to achieve many different human resources objectives for simply staffing jobs, for orienting new employees, for preventing job boredom, to relief employees from fatigue, apathy, and carelessness and finally for training employees and enhancing their career development. Organizations have a choice of whether to train employees or not, the only choice to be made is a method to be adopted in the training and retraining processes especially in the business. It follows that there are quite a number of training development programs which are available to be adopted by an organization to increase employees' skills, talents, and knowledge. Onosode (1982) believes that the most benefiting impact of productivity would be possible if the most effective method of work is applied. These training methods are meant to motivate, enlighten, update, acquaint and educate workers on what to do thereby ensuring efficiency in the operation of an organization.

Job rotation involves an employee changing positions within the same organization and eventually returning to the original position. It can refer to different types of rotations. Position rotation is the process of laterally moving an employee to different positions, departments or geographic locations for the purposes of professionally developing the

employee by exposing them to new knowledge, skills and perspectives. Position rotation can be further broken down into function rotation and cross-functional rotation

Among the various techniques available to the management of an organization is the pattern that makes it possible to move employees from one department unit or position to the other from time to time to acquire knowledge and skills of what is obtainable in other areas of the work. This type of training is referred in technical term as job rotation. Thus, an employee who must have undergone a complete job rotation training program in an organization would not only have mastered the entire operational process, but must have gotten enough experience to train others or to manage the firm in the long-run.

Job rotation program enables a worker to make a career in a work place and stand the chance of climbing the leadership ladder to the top. Thus, gaining promotion from one level to another based on his competence, efficiency, productivity and effectiveness in the performance of a given task. Adequate, comprehensive, up-to-date and the right training therefore becomes an answer to a smooth operation in an organization which enhances and aid management in executing policies, and programs. Job rotation is one of the factors to enhance the productivity of an organization, but it needs proper training and cooperative colleagues to support the employees in the current position (Gómez, Lorente, & Cabrera, 2004). In other words, job rotation is a mechanism through which the leadership determines the employees' commitment, productivity and innovation in their respective jobs (Ortega, 2001).

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Job rotation is the surest way of keeping the employee away from complacency and boredom of routine. It is difficult for an employee to sustain his interest in a given job for any substantial length of time, as humans have the tendency of outgrowing their jobs through the learning and experience that they gain over a period of time. Stimulating human mind through diversity of challenges is a sure way to bring to the forefront, its creative instincts and in taking the individual and organizational performance to a higher plane.

Employees play an important role in the advancement and quality enhancement of an organization (Spencer, 1994). Job rotation system is one of the two-targeted mechanisms which simplifies executive affairs and develops human resources. Job rotation saves time and costs, leads to better works and trains human resources in various aspects (Soltani, 2000, p:35). Job rotation is used extensively as development technique (Mir Sepasi et al, 2009, p: 426).

Job rotation has become an excellent tool to increase productivity, and work effectively towards the all-round development of employees. The days of employees spending decades at a company and receiving a gold watch in gratitude are long gone. Job rotation helps employers create a pool of talent with wholesome experience. It is a structured initiative that helps individuals to gain experience across various functions and broaden their perspective. Sullivan and Au (1998)

Job rotation entails moving employees from one job function to another (that requires similar skill sets) at specific intervals. It is gaining immense popularity as companies are trying to break the monotony and add variety to its employees' daily responsibilities by allowing them to absorb new skills on a continual basis, this help to retain employees' interest in their work, ensures employee satisfaction since they get to learn from a variety of experiences and acquire new skills and it increases the knowledge base of the organization which translates directly into a more competitive company. Job rotation is an efficient and modern labour market policy instrument in achieving the objectives and satisfying the demands arising from the challenges facing businesses, since the nineties job rotation has proved to be one of the best means of increasing productivity, through employees learning curve and reduce employees from boredom.

Traditionally, job rotation is usually addressed at an organizational level, organizational theorists have advocated frequent rotation as a means of reducing fatigue and boredom on production jobs so as to maintain productivity. Job rotation is normally offered to employees with high potential, it works towards grooming leaders with cross functional knowledge and experience for the future.

The importance of job rotation has been long recognized in almost every corporate setting all around the world. Job rotation is an excellent way for the organizations to develop employees, managers and executives (Beatty et al., 1987). It enables the training of employees to be backups for other employees so that the organizations have a more flexible work force and a ready supply of trained employees which serves as a competitive edge for the organizations (Rothwell and Kazanas, 1994). Job rotation also improves employee's problem-solving abilities and shared understanding of the job, enhances team efficiency and enables the employees to avail promotion opportunities after successful completion of job rotation programs (Faegri et al., 2010). Thus, both the employees and employers can benefit from job rotation practices.

Job rotations for workers must include aspects related to work environment, along with other individual attributes already explained, so that it adds to his satisfaction derived from balanced distribution of work load, working conditions and learning opportunities. In the same vein, Awojo (1997) pointed out that one of the best training devices to an organization is rotation. This training indeed, when completed is expected to enhance a worker's performance and productivity in the company.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to assess the impact job rotation on employee's performance in an organization.

Specific Objectives are to:

- Examine whether the Unilever Ghana limited practice job rotation.
- Examine the challenges faced by the organization when practicing job rotation.
- Determine measures to overcome those challenges.
- Determine whether job rotation has impact on the organizational performance.

Research Questions

In achieving the intended objectives of the study, the following questions were posed

- Is job rotation practiced in the organization?
- How often is job employee's rotation conducted?
- How does job rotation affect employee's performance?
- What challenges does the organization face when conducting job rotation?
- What measures are used in overcoming those challenges?
- Does organizational performance depend on employees' rotation?

Methodology

Research Design

This study relied on descriptive statistics. Research design is a blue print which indicates how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000. Questionnaires were used to obtain data from twenty-five (25) management trainees of Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema, and the conclusion was generalized for the population of the organization.

Study Population

The population consist of five hundred (500) employees of Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema of which twenty-five (25) management trainees were selected. These personnel are trained in the various departments in the organization for them to gain a variety of skills and also enable the new employees to better understand the various functions in the organization.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique that was adopted for this research was non- probability purposive sampling. Thus purposive sampling was used for the study, because out of the total population of 500 employees only twenty-five (25) management trainees were drawn from the population because of the objective of the study. According to Saunder et al (2007), when the population of the study is less than thirty (30), data from all the cases in that category should be normally collected.

Data Analysis

The data collected have been coded and input into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 computer software for the analysis and descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. The descriptive analytical tools

include the use of simple frequency distribution and percentages in a tabular form.

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Discussions

Demographic Data

Table 1. Gender of Respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	15	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Female	10	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2015

Table 1 shows that out of the 25 respondents, 60% were males and 40% were females. The data suggests that there is a vast difference between the number of males and females in the study, depicting that male management employees at Unilever Ghana Limited dominate females.

Table 2. Age range of respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30 years	2	8.0	8.7	8.7
	31-40 years	14	56.0	60.9	69.6
	41-50 years	7	28.0	30.4	100.0
	Total	23	92.0	100.0	
	Missing System	2	8.0		
Total		25	100.0		

Table 2, shows the representation of the age range of the respondents. 2 respondents, representing 8.0% falls under 20-30 years, 14 also representing 56.0% falls under 31-40 years. Also, 7 respondents, representing 28.0% falls under 41-50 years. The table also depicts the fact that 8% of the employees did not indicate their response. However, it was also found from the study that majority of the respondents were of the ages ranging between 31- 40 years. The advantage here is that the company has majority of its workers within the active employment zone thus the youth, the company also stands the chance of working with experienced staffs.

Table 3. Educational Background of Respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SSCE	4	16.0	17.4	17.4
	DBS	1	4.0	4.3	21.7
	HND	2	8.0	8.7	30.4
	Degree	16	64.0	69.6	100.0
	Total	23	92.0	100.0	
Missing System		2	8.0		
Total		25	100.0		

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 3 indicates that 16% of the respondents were SSCE Certificate Holders whereas 4.0% were DBS Certificate holders, 8% held HND Certificate, 64% held Certificates from the Universities thus, first and second degree. 8% of the respondents did not indicate their response.

Table 4. Practice of job rotation by Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	92.0	95.8	95.8
	No	1	4.0	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	96.0	100.0	
Missing System		1	4.0		
Total		25	100.0		

Source: Field Work, 2015

The researcher as part of the study wanted to examine whether job rotation is practiced at Unilever Ghana Limited.

The majority of respondents (92%) reported that Unilever Ghana Limited practice job rotation.

Only 4% of the respondents indicated that Unilever Ghana Limited does not practice job rotation. Moreover 4% of the respondents did not express their views on this question. There is a clear indication that job rotation is practiced at Unilever Ghana Limited and those who did not respond might be due to lack of information on the company's policy on job rotation.

Table 5. Conducting job rotation by Unilever Ghana limited, Tema.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once every 6 months	6	24.0	25.0	25.0
	Once a year	9	36.0	37.5	62.5
	Not often	9	36.0	37.5	100.0
	Total	24	96.0	100.0	
Missing System		1	4.0		
Total		25	100.0		

Source: Field Work, 2015

From Table 5, 36% of the respondent indicated that conducting job rotation was not often; it is evident that 24% of the respondents reflects that conducting job rotation by Unilever Ghana is once every 6 months. 36% also indicated that conducting job rotation occurs once a year within the organization. There could be a correlation between the response above in Table 4 and 5 which implies that indeed Unilever Ghana practice job rotation but occurs once a year. However, only 4% of the respondents did not express their views on this.

Table 6. Effectiveness of job rotation program in Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Effective	3	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Effective	17	68.0	68.0	80.0
	Not effective	3	12.0	12.0	92.0
	Not Too Effective	2	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

From Table 6, respondents confidently responded that job rotation program in Unilever Ghana Limited is very effective but relatively low (12%), and it was compared to those who reported not too effective thus (8%). Comparing to table 5 these two responses may be correlated; it could be the same respondents who reported not too often in relation to conducting job rotation. However, positive response on its been "effective" seems to be stronger (68%) as reflected by table 6, nevertheless negative response from the survey indicated that (12%) were of the view that job rotation program in the organization was not effective.

Table 7. Factors that cause management to practice job rotation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Reduce employee's boredom	1	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Company's policy	4	16.0	16.0	20.0
	Increase Employee's skill variation	16	64.0	64.0	84.0
	Fill future vacancies	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

In attempt to find out the factors that lead management to practice job rotation, 4% of the respondents indicated that it's aimed at reducing boredom within the organization. Some of the respondents constituting 16% indicated it's the company's policy. Majority of the respondents indicated it was geared towards an increase in employee's skill thus 64%. Only 16% of the respondents reported it fills future vacancies. The interpretation can be made that lack of adequate expertise and skills leads to the practice of job rotation by management of Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema.

Table 8. Awareness of challenges facing the organization in conducting job rotation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	32.0	32.0	32.0
	No	4	16.0	16.0	48.0
	Maybe	13	52.0	52.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

The response rate of 52% of the respondents reported they have really not been aware of the challenges facing the organization in conducting job rotation, a reflection of the employees not really understanding job rotation within the organization. On the hand 32% of the respondents reported to be aware of the challenges facing the organization in conducting job rotation, this is a clear indication that a higher number of the respondents are somehow aware of these challenges as compared to those that reported No constituting only 16%.

Table 9. Frequent job rotation help to overcome organizational challenges.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	No	4	16.0	16.0	64.0
	Maybe	9	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 9 gives a clear indication that majority (48%) of respondents believes that frequent job rotation helps to overcome organizational challenges and therefore responded to "Yes". However, 36% of the respondents were not sure that frequent job rotation helps to overcome organizational challenges. More so, 36% of the respondents strongly indicated that they do not believe that frequent job rotation helps to overcome organizational challenges and therefore also responded to "No" and this could be due to lack of policy assessment on job rotation policy in the company.

Table 10. Link between job rotation and organizational performance.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	14	56.0	56.0	56.0
	No	2	8.0	8.0	64.0
	Maybe	9	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

In attempt for the researchers to find out the impact of job rotation on organizational performance, table 10 also gives a clear indication that the majority of the respondents indicated that indeed there is a connection between job rotation and organizational performance. This resulted in 56% as per the total number of respondents that expressed their views on this. 8% of the respondents strongly indicated that they do not believe that there is any form of connection between job rotation and organizational performance. There are a substantial number of respondents who are not sure as to

whether there exists a connection between job rotation and organizational performance.

Table 11. Increase in organizational performance during job rotation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	44.0	44.0	44.0
	No	5	20.0	20.0	64.0
	Maybe	9	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

From table 11 above, 44% of the respondents believe job rotation has an impact on organizational performance, which may be an indication of the organizational acceptance of job rotation. However, 20% reported that they don't believe job rotation has an impact on organizational performance within the organization. Majority of the respondents could be described as employees that have really understood job rotation very well within the organization (Desseler, 2000), also 36% were not sure as to whether job rotation has an impact on organizational performance.

Table 12. Effect on organizational performance of Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very High	1	4.0	4.0	4.0
	High	20	80.0	80.0	84.0
	Low	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

In table 12, 4% of the respondents reported that the effects of job rotation on organizational performance was Very high and 80% reported that the effects of job rotation on organizational performance was High. This could be a strong indication that their roles are always in contradictory with each other. However, 16% of the respondents indicated that the effects were low. This is a clear indication that they are most of the time comfortable with what is expected of them at work thus minimizing the possibility of high effects of job rotation on the organizational performance.

Table 13. Adopting to job rotation practices by Unilever Ghana Limited, Tema.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	24	96.0	96.0	96.0
	No	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 13 reflects that the majority (96%) of the respondents indicated that they would encourage the organization to adopt to job rotation practice as often as possible.

Only 4% is confident that there is no need for the organization to adapt to job rotation practice. The interpretation is that the responses are a reflection of employee satisfaction with job rotation within the organization. Frost (2003) propagated that emotional pain exists in every organization. The authors are of the opinion that the sources of the pain vary but much of it comes from abusive managers, unreasonable company policies, disruptive co-workers or clients, or from poorly managed change. The tangible consequences include lost profits resulting from diminished productivity or worse mass exodus. It can be deduced from Table 7 that the reason for job rotation within the organization is to improve employee's skill

and is part of the policies that is implemented by the organization.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The study discovered that job rotation was practiced at Unilever Ghana limited, Tema and in addition, conducting of job rotation was often done in the company.

On the effectiveness of job rotation, it was observed that the company did not have an effective system in place and factors that cause management to practice job rotation was as a result of lack of adequate expertise and skills. On the awareness of the challenges facing the organization in conducting job rotation it was observed that a moderate number of respondents were aware of the challenges the organization face when conducting job rotation.

In addition, the study revealed that frequent job rotation aided in overcoming organizational challenges, however in linking job rotation and organizational performance there was a high indication of a connection between job rotation and organizational performance. It's was also found out that job rotation had a great impact on the organizational performance. Finally, the study also observed that the effect of job performance in relation to job rotation at Unilever Ghana Limited was very high while it was also found out by the researchers that the organization had fully adopted job rotation practices which is a policy in the organization and aims at improving employee's skills.

Conclusion

The study accessed the impact of job rotation on organizational performance, the first objective concluded that the company practice job rotation in the organization, on the challenges associated with the practice of job rotation at Unilever Ghana limited, Tema the researchers can conclude that its effectiveness in implementation is minimal in the organization. This is due to the company not having enough managerial roles for the trainees to take up, some felt underutilized and poaching of rotating personal was high. In relation to how to overcome this challenges the researchers concluded that frequent and rotational practices in the organization can help and also creating enough managerial roles in the organization.

Finally, the impact of job rotation on organizational performance was moderately positive, significant and favorable in the organization since it helps employees to acquire more skills, knowledge and talent and also reduce boredom. The researcher can conclude that job rotation contribute immensely in the positive and favorable manner to employee's performance in a given place.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made from the findings and conclusions

- In assessing the impact of job rotation on organizational performance it is recommended that maximum productivity can be attained when employees are adequately and properly trained and motivated.
- Management can handle issues by identifying and correcting errors, irregularities, personal collusion, safeguarding assets and maintaining a sustainable internal control system by implementing its policy on job rotation system.
- The planning process should identify and quantify potential losses in productivity and identify compensatory mechanisms

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