

Evaluating the Effect of Job Rotation on Employee Retention and Satisfaction: a Case Study of Zambia Telecommunications Company Limited (Zamtel) Finance Department

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Abstract: Management strategists in most organizations are faced with challenges of attracting and retaining top-notch employees within their organizations. Apart from attractive monetary compensation, leaves, job rotation as a method of employee retention has least been researched on. Therefore, the use of an effective strategy for the proper management of job rotation program has great importance and aids in minimizing the negative impacts of circulation. For this reason, this study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of Job rotation on job satisfaction and job retention at ZAMTEL Zambia Limited. In pursuing this objective, the study utilized a case study approach in seeking to describe the Job rotation process in place within ZAMTEL'S finance department and ascertaining the effect of Job rotation on employee satisfaction. Further, Exploratory and descriptive designs, which aimed to look into the effectiveness of job rotation on the performance of employees, were employed in the study. As a result, an inductive approach was adopted towards the analysis of the research findings. The study made use of primary and secondary data to facilitate the collecting of both qualitative and quantitative information on the subject. The study found that the hypothesis that states that the use of Job rotation results in an increase in employee satisfaction was not statistically significant. Notwithstanding this, ZAMTEL employees have positive attitude towards the practice of Job rotation. The study found that about 72.5 % of the respondents support the practice of Job rotation while only 6.0 % registered strong negative attitude towards Job rotation. The attitude of employees towards Job rotation was not influenced by the employee's age, marital status, sex and economic status. However, the case of Zamtel has shown that the relationship of the key variables is not statistically significant. Notwithstanding that, it was observed that other key variables such as incentives, promotions, longer employment contracts, independence from government in its operations needed to be explored further to understand the key contributors to job satisfaction and retention at the company. The study recommended that ZAMTEL should regularly utilise the practice of job rotation to increase the level of Job satisfaction. The study further recommended that there was need to incentivize employees at ZAMTEL as they are not deriving satisfaction from job rotation. It was also recommended that the government should continue to capitalize the company so that it is made more attractive to the employees to encourage retention in the Finance Department.

Key words: *Job rotation, management, Job satisfaction, Job retention, ZAMTEL*

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, in organizations, job rotation has become an important issue because it has an impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, the use of an effective strategy for the proper management of job rotation program has great importance. Managers should pay attention to the job circulation problems so as to solve them and minimize the negative impacts of circulation (Abdullahzadeh, 2007). The benefits of job rotation (transfer and promotion) from two different points that is from organizational and individual have been analyzed (Jordan and Brauner, 2008). Organizationally, the transfer of employees from one job to another job results in developing employees' skills. Managers who change jobs in different parts of the organization they serve gain valuable and practical experience thereof. Thus, they are prepared for higher positions. As well as transfer and promotion of manpower and employment

planning problem is solved. For example, when organizations expand their operations or merged with another organization it offers Transfer and promotion of staff needed for the new position. Individual aspects of such organizations benefit from the transfer and promotion. Most managers like to use a professional at a young age and have an overview of the organization where they work. This allows the transfer and promotion of the opportunity to obtain a new set of knowledge and competencies. Promotion could mean increases in compensation and benefits for employees.

According to Bennett (2003), job rotation is a planned replacement of employees among various jobs within a period of time in order to enhance skills and job independence and results in increasing motivation, job performance and productivity. Similarly, Gomez, Lorente & Cabrera (2004) define job rotation as the working in varying posts or situations at time periods which are categorized on a range of individual knowledge, skill and capability of employees. Jaturanonda, Nanthavanij and Chongphaisal (2006) found that organizations from the private and public sectors considered the combined 'knowledge, skills and abilities' as the predominant decision criterion on who to rotate, irrespective of the purpose of job rotation. Job rotation or cross training (Ho, Chang, Shih & Liang, 2009) aims to broaden knowledge, skills and experience by moving people from job to job or department to department (Delpasand, Raiisi, Begdely & Shahabi, 2010; Lindbeck & Snower, 2000; Olorunsula, 2000). It can be an inefficient and frustrating method of acquiring additional knowledge and skills unless it is carefully planned and controlled. Job rotation is a systematic change of employees by transferring them between various areas of responsibility in attempts to enhance employee experience in the job (Dessler & Varkkey, 2009; Malinski, 2002; Zin, Mohd Shamsudin & Subramaniam, 2013). In this regard, Dubois (2000), Williams, Cantillon and Cochrane (2000) and Ebadan and Winstanley (1997) concluded that if employees value job security, increased lateral moves will be imperative to allow organizational renewal and growth in the future.

When job rotation is carefully planned and formally developed it has numerous perceived benefits and is particularly useful in the various industry and work places.

A bored employee can have a substantially negative impact on the level of motivation of other employees. A demotivated workforce will ultimately result in high absenteeism and employee turnover rates usually accompanied by poor customer service (Melamed, Ben-Avi, Luz & Green, 1995). Job rotation has been found to relieve boredom and monotony (USA Today Magazine, 1995). According to Azizi, Zolfaghari & Liang (2009), the most important employee benefit of differentiation at work is the prevention of monotony. A range of issues including repetitious work causes boredom and where boredom exists, unproductive behaviours and attitudes such as apathy, disinterest in job, unhappiness, frustration and escapism and avoidance dominate (Melamed, 1995).

In the provision of mobile telecommunication services, the company faces huge competition from the other players that include Airtel Networks Zambia Limited (AIRTEL), MTN Zambia Limited (MTN) and the more recent VODAFONE Zambia LTD which broke into the market in 2016 (VODAFONE, 2018). These and other telecommunication companies have more recently turned to the provision of Mobile money services. On this frontier, ZAMTEL faces competition from a mobile money business service called ZAMKWACHA, from Airtel Networks through Airtel Mobile Money and MTN Zambia through its service called MTN Mobile Money (FSD Zambia, 2018).

The use of job rotation in such a competitive telecommunication industry is cardinal for both productivity gains and reduced costs due to lower employee turnover. Job rotation can be applied to all departments in the organization and thus the finance department is not an exception. This is the department that oversees all financial and accounting services and thus increased productivity due to enhanced job satisfaction can have positive ripple effects throughout the organization. A standard Finance Department has various sections or units which include Payables, Receivables, Fixed Assets, Revenue Assurance, Inventory, Treasury and Tax. In summing up, as a profit-making entity, the Finance Department is a critical organ of ZAMTEL. That being the case, it is important that employees who are found in the department receive the necessary satisfaction which can be stimulated through rotating them in various jobs within the department and across branches.

1.1 General Objective

The study evaluated the extent of use and effect of Job rotation on employee satisfaction at ZAMTEL Company Limited.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Job rotation is beneficial to both the organization and employees because employees derive satisfaction from rotating among jobs. ZAMTEL's Finance department has had staff strength of 42 workers in different capacities earning in the range of ZMW 6,000 TO ZMW 60,000. The company has put in place various measures to retain and satisfy the employees. Among the measures that the company has put in place is the health insurance policy which allows workers with their family members to access inexpensive health services at selected hospitals and clinics in the location that the workers are based. Further the company provides advance salary finance facilities for their workers which are easily accessed when need arises. The company also endeavors to provide a good and clean office environment as a motivation to the employees at the company. However, despite the different measures that the company has put in place to retain its employees, every year, about 50 per cent of the employees in the finance department move to other companies in search for better opportunities. The study intends to evaluate the job rotation system at ZAMTEL and determine the effectiveness of company's job rotation practices on employee's level of Job satisfaction and retention in the Finance department.

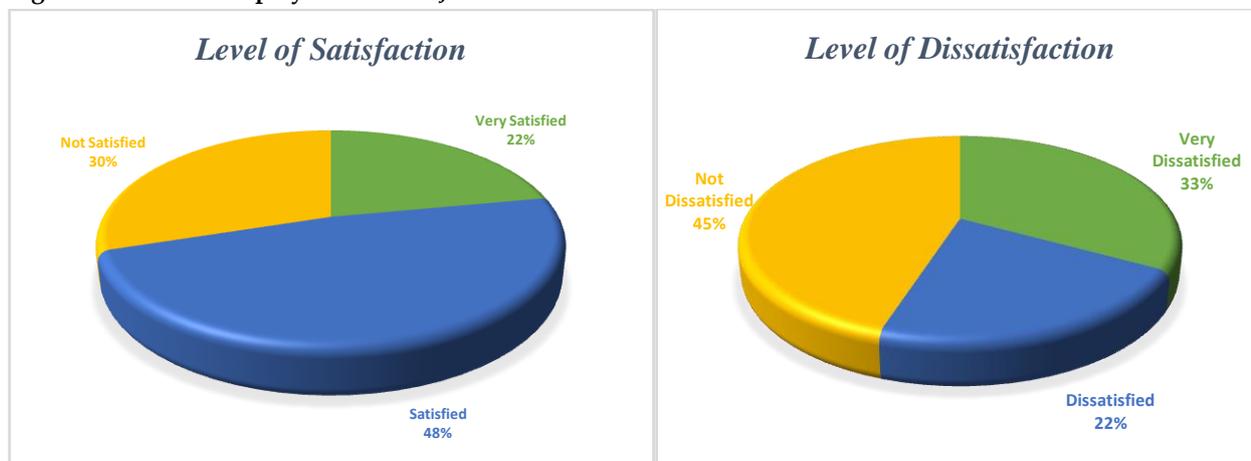
This study, being a case study of ZAMTEL, was restricted to the Finance Department at ZAMTEL head office in Lusaka. It therefore involved conducting interviews with officials from the Human Resource department at headquarters and was restricted to the subject of effectiveness of job rotation as a way of satisfying employees. The study can therefore not be directly applied to other organization and other department since the findings may be unique to ZAMTEL's finance.

II. FINDINGS

2.1 Job Rotation and Level of Satisfaction

The surveyed employees were asked to rate their level of Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The results have been summarized by figure 1 below:

Figure 1: ZAMTEL employees' level of Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction



Source: Computed by Author using sample data

Figure 1 above shows that the majority of the respondents (48%) felt satisfied with job rotation as compared to 22% who stated that they were dissatisfied. However, those who reported to be very satisfied accounted for only 22% of the respondents who reported to have been satisfied. Comparatively, among the employees who reported to have been dissatisfied with their Job, 33% stated that they were very dissatisfied. Generally, therefore, a ZAMTEL employee is more likely to be satisfied with their Job.

2.2 Relationship between Job Rotation and Job Satisfaction

It has been postulated under hypothesis H_{a3} that there is positive relationship between Job rotation and Job Satisfaction. In order to test the validity of this hypothesis, a chi-square test of association was conducted on employee Job rotation and Job satisfaction. Table 1 summarized the results.

Table 1: Relationship between Job Rotation and Job Satisfaction

<i>Result of Job Rotation</i>	Are you Satisfied?	
	Yes	No
<i>More satisfaction from rotation</i>	63.2%	0.0%
<i>Less satisfaction from rotation</i>	21.1%	100.0%
<i>Nothing changes</i>	15.8%	0.0%

$\chi^2 = 3.1588 \quad df = 2 \quad p = 0.206$

According to table 1 above, there is no significant relationship between job rotation and one’s level of satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis that the more one gets rotated, the more they get satisfied is rejected.

III. DISCUSSION

The research found no evidence of a positive relationship between Job rotation and Job satisfaction as suggested by Rasouli (2014) and Sweeney (2008). It must be noted however that most empirical studies on Job rotation estimate a relationship with employee performance and not satisfaction (see KibiyaAjusa et al (2016), Zahra et al (2014) and Rasouli (2014)). It is apparent that employee satisfaction influenced by numerous factors and more unobservable as compared to employee performance. According to Saravarni and Abbasi (2013), Job performance is not directly influenced by Job rotation-it is mediated by Job satisfaction and skill variation. The effect of Job rotation on Job satisfaction may be more significant when employee performance is used as a proxy of Job satisfaction.

A few studies have found that Job rotation reduced employee motivation and may thus translate into reduce job satisfaction. These include Eriksson and Ortega (2014) and Mashsan et al. (2012). Eriksson and Ortega (2014) considered the factors behind the adoption of Job rotation and found no statistical evidence to support the Employee Motivation Hypothesis. This means there was no evidence that Job rotation positively influence employee motivation. More definitely, Mashsan et al. (2012) found that Job rotation reduced motivation but increases commitment and employees involvement. This situation may suggest that the Job rotation practice may be improperly implemented and this causes worker to be demotivated.

ZAMTEL’s Human resource department has been found to be involved in the implementation of Job rotation through the provision of motivation such as salary increase, promotion and other incentives. The department also conducts performance appraisals as employees rotate. This enables the department to determine which role is more suitable for an employee.

This is in conformity with the application of the Employer Learning Hypothesis. Eriksson and Ortega (2014) found statistical evidence to support the use of the Employer Learning Hypothesis. Through the employee motivation and socialization functions, ZAMTEL’s Human resource department applies Maslow’s Needs theory which postulates that employers can seek to motivate employees by making them more self-actualized, productive and satisfied by meeting their social needs.

Job rotation at ZAMTEL takes the form of Position rotation which involves literally moving an employee to different positions, departments or geographic locations for the purpose of developing the employee professionally by exposing them to new knowledge, skills and perspectives. There is also task rotation which involves moving employees from highly stressing demanding task to less stressing demanding ones to give them a breather or break.

Employees at ZAMTEL have not been experiencing job satisfaction from job rotation. There has been no relationship between attitude towards Job Rotation and employees’ age, sex, economic status or marital status. However, there have been varied levels of dissatisfaction where the older employees are experiencing less dissatisfaction when compared to the young ones. The human resource department has been conducting training, motivating employees and socializing them as a way of making them benefit from the rotation process.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research sought to evaluate the effectiveness of Job rotation on job satisfaction and job retention at ZAMTEL Zambia Limited. In pursuing this objective, the study utilized a case study approach in seeking to describe the Job

rotation process in place within ZAMTEL'S finance department and ascertaining the effect of Job rotation on employee satisfaction. The research utilized both quantitative and qualitative technique and collected data using both semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. The data was analyzed by generating frequency tables and graphs as well as using the Chi-square test. Based on the Chi-square test, it has been found that, for the case of ZAMTEL, the relationship between job rotation and job satisfaction is not statistically significant. The result is supported by some empirical and theoretical literature. In line with these and other findings, it has been recommended that ZAMTEL and the Zambian government take advantage of the positive attitude of the employees towards Job rotation and enhance the effectiveness of job rotations in order to increase Job satisfaction and retention. Job rotation is in place and contributes to job satisfaction to a limited extent but not the main mechanism to retain employees. Job dissatisfaction is one of the reasons why there is high staff turnover but job rotation is not the only contributor to the satisfaction but other variables such as incentives, promotions, longer employment contracts, independence from government in its operations which need to be explored further.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

To ZAMTEL Employees: Job rotation is meant to bring about job satisfaction as well as other benefits such as obtaining various skills. Employees should take advantage of this opportunity that is available to them. The fact that employees have support for the practice should be able to increase the use of the practice and increase the level of Job satisfaction.

To ZAMTEL Management: There is need to incentivize employees at ZAMTEL as they are not deriving satisfaction from job rotation. This situation has resulted in increased Job turnover as employees are leaving the company for other organizations.

To the Government of the Republic of Zambia: ZAMTEL is a parastatal owned by the Zambian government. It is being recommended that the government continue to capitalize the company so it is made more attractive to the employees to encourage retention

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