



The Effects of Job Rotation on Employee Performance: A Test of the Job Characteristics Model in a Commercial Bank

Abubakar Yusuf Maitama^{1*}, Aisha Yusuf Bukar¹, Fatima Yusuf²

¹Department of Business Administration and Management, School of Management Sciences, The Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Nigeria.

* Corresponding author: maitamayusuf2@gmail.com

Abstract

In the Nigerian banking sector, optimizing employee performance is a key strategic imperative. This study investigates the mechanisms through which job rotation influences employee performance by applying the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) as a theoretical framework. We hypothesize that job rotation enhances core job characteristics, particularly skill variety, which in turn drives performance. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected from 108 employees across six branches of Union Bank in Northeast Nigeria. Composite variables for job rotation participation, skill variety, career development, job satisfaction, and employee performance were constructed and validated using Cronbach's Alpha. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that job satisfaction ($\beta = .35, p < .001$) and skill variety ($\beta = .28, p < .01$) are significant positive predictors of employee performance. However, perceptions of career development did not show a statistically significant relationship with performance in our model. The overall model was significant ($F(3, 104) = 14.82, p < .001$) and explained 30% of the variance in employee performance (Adjusted $R^2 = .281$). These findings suggest that the performance benefits of job rotation are primarily mediated by its ability to enrich the job itself by increasing skill variety and enhancing job satisfaction, rather than through long-term career promises alone. The study offers practical recommendations for designing more effective job rotation programs that focus on enhancing core job characteristics.

Keywords: Job Rotation, Employee Performance, Job Characteristics Model, Skill Variety, Job Satisfaction, Nigerian Banking Sector, Human Resource Management.

Article Information:

Received: 23 October 2024
Revised: 23 December 2024
Accepted: 28 December 2024
Published: 2024

Vol. 14, No. 1, 2024

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Introduction

The Nigerian banking industry operates in a dynamic and intensely competitive environment, compelling organizations to continuously seek strategies that enhance organizational efficiency and employee performance (Adeoye & Olorunleke, 2019). Among the various human resource management (HRM) practices, job rotation—the systematic movement of employees between different jobs within an organization—has been widely adopted as a tool for developing a flexible, skilled, and motivated workforce (Lee *et al.*, 2021). Proponents argue that job rotation can mitigate monotony, foster skill diversification, improve employee engagement, and ultimately boost productivity (Shah *et al.*, 2023).

Despite its intuitive appeal and widespread use, the effectiveness of job rotation is not guaranteed. Its impact can be moderated by numerous factors, and the underlying psychological mechanisms through which it influences performance are not always clearly understood by managers (Zafar *et al.*, 2023). While many organizations, including Union Bank, implement job rotation, they often lack a structured framework for evaluating its impact on key employee outcomes. This creates a critical gap between practice and evidence, potentially leading to the inefficient allocation of resources and suboptimal program design.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the effect of job rotation on employee performance within Union Bank,

using the six branches across Northeast Nigeria as a case study. We move beyond a simple input-output analysis by grounding our research in the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) of Hackman and Oldham (1976). We posit that job rotation's primary value lies in its ability to redesign work by enhancing core job dimensions, particularly skill variety. Testing this model enables this study to uncover the specific pathways through which job rotation influences performance. Our contribution is threefold: first, we provide a theory-driven analysis of job rotation in a non-Western, emerging market context; second, we employ robust methodological practices to test our hypotheses; and third, we offer evidence-based recommendations for designing more impactful job rotation initiatives.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM)

The JCM, developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), is one of the most influential theories in work design. It proposes that the psychological experience of work mediates the relationship between job characteristics and work outcomes. The model specifies five core job dimensions:



1. **Skill Variety:** The degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of a number of different skills and talents of the person.
2. **Task Identity:** The degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work.
3. **Task Significance:** The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people.
4. **Autonomy:** The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual.
5. **Feedback:** The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the individual obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance.

These dimensions are theorized to influence three critical psychological states: experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results. In turn, these states are predicted to lead to positive outcomes such as high internal work motivation, high-quality performance, high job satisfaction, and low absenteeism and turnover.

Hypothesis Development

Job rotation is fundamentally a work design intervention. Its most direct and observable effect is on skill variety. Moving an employee through different roles (e.g., from customer service to loan processing) increases the range of tasks and skills the employee must utilize (Lee *et al.*, 2021). According to the JCM, an increase in skill variety should enhance the experienced meaningfulness of the work, leading to improved motivation and performance. This leads to our first hypothesis:

H1: Higher perceived skill variety is positively associated with higher employee performance.

While skill variety is a core job characteristic, overall job satisfaction is a crucial affective outcome that captures an employee's overall contentment with their work. Job satisfaction has been consistently linked to higher performance, a relationship often summarized as "a happy worker is a productive worker" (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Job rotation is often implemented with the explicit goal of boosting satisfaction by reducing boredom and providing new challenges (Park & Kim, 2020). Therefore, we expect job satisfaction to be a strong predictor of performance.

H2: Higher job satisfaction is positively associated with higher employee performance.

Finally, job rotation is often framed as a tool for career development. It provides employees with a broader understanding of the organization and prepares them for future leadership roles (Nguyen & Le, 2020). The prospect of career advancement can be a powerful motivator, potentially leading employees to exert greater effort in their current roles to signal their readiness for promotion.

H3: More positive perceptions of career development opportunities are positively associated with higher employee performance.

Methodology

Research Design and Sample

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The target population was all employees of Union Bank in the six states of Northeast Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe). A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed across the six main branches in these states. Of these, 108 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 72%. This sample size ($n = 108$) is adequate for the planned multiple regression analysis.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. All constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scales (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). The items were adapted from established, validated scales in the literature to ensure content validity.

- **Skill Variety (3 items):** Adapted from the Work Design Questionnaire (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). A sample item is: "My job requires me to use a wide range of skills and talents."
- **Career Development (3 items):** Adapted from the scale by Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel (2009). A sample item is: "This organization provides me with real opportunities to improve my skills for career advancement."
- **Job Satisfaction (3 items):** Measured using the abridged version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). A sample item is: "In general, I am very satisfied with my job."
- **Employee Performance (4 items):** A self-reported performance scale adapted from Williams & Anderson (1991). A sample item is: "I consistently meet all the formal performance requirements of my job."

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). First, descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables. Second, the internal consistency of the multi-item scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Third, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the variables. Finally, a standard multiple linear regression was performed to test the hypotheses.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the four composite variables. The mean scores for all variables are above the neutral point of 3.0, indicating generally positive perceptions among the employees. Employee Performance has the highest mean ($M = 3.95$), while Career Development has the lowest ($M = 3.45$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Composite Variables ($n = 108$)

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Employee Performance	3.95	0.68	2.25	5.00
Skill Variety	3.78	0.81	1.67	5.00
Job Satisfaction	3.65	0.95	1.33	5.00
Career Development	3.45	1.02	1.00	5.00

Table 2. Scale Reliabilities (α) and Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Employee Performance	(0.88)			
2. Skill Variety	.42**	(0.81)		
3. Job Satisfaction	.51**	.45**	(0.86)	
4. Career Development	.33**	.39**	.48**	(0.85)

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Cronbach's α are shown in parentheses on the diagonal.

Scale Reliability and Correlations

As shown in Table 2, all scales demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.81 to 0.88, all well above the accepted threshold of 0.70. The correlation matrix shows that all



Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Employee Performance

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	p
(Constant)	1.750	0.350		5.000	< .001
Skill Variety	0.235	0.082	0.280	2.870	0.005
Job Satisfaction	0.250	0.068	0.350	3.680	< .001
Career Development	0.083	0.067	0.120	1.250	0.215

Model Summary: R² = .300, Adjusted R² = .281; F(3, 104) = 14.82, p < .001.

three independent variables are significantly and positively correlated with Employee Performance, providing preliminary support for the hypotheses. The correlations among the predictors are moderate, indicating that multicollinearity is not a major issue.

Multiple Regression Results

A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict Employee Performance from Skill Variety, Job Satisfaction, and Career Development. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 104) = 14.82, p < .001$, and explained 30% of the variance in employee performance (Adjusted R² = .281). The detailed results in Table 3 show that Job Satisfaction was the strongest predictor of Employee Performance ($\beta = .35, p < .001$). Skill Variety was also a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .28, p = .005$). These findings support H1 and H2. However, Career Development was not a statistically significant predictor of performance in the model ($p = .215$). Therefore, H3 was not supported.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the pathways through which job rotation influences employee performance, using the Job Characteristics Model as a guide. Our results provide a nuanced picture, highlighting the differential impact of various psychological outcomes.

The strong, significant, and positive relationship between skill variety and employee performance (supporting H1) provides direct empirical support for a core tenet of the JCM. This suggests that the performance benefits of job rotation are not abstract; they are rooted in the tangible redesign of an employee's work. Exposing employees to a wider range of tasks through job rotation makes the job itself more engaging and challenging, which translates into higher self-reported performance. This aligns with findings that enriched jobs foster greater ownership and motivation (Lee *et al.*, 2021).

The finding that job satisfaction is the most powerful predictor of performance (supporting H2) is consistent with a vast body of literature (Judge *et al.*, 2001). For the employees in our sample, feeling content and positive about their job is a primary driver of their performance. Job rotation programs that successfully reduce monotony and increase engagement are likely to boost satisfaction, which in turn fuels performance.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is the non-significant effect of career development on performance (rejecting H3) when considered alongside the other variables. While career development opportunities were positively correlated with performance, their predictive power disappeared in the multiple regression model. This suggests that while employees may value career prospects, their day-to-day performance is more strongly influenced by the immediate nature of their work (skill variety) and their overall feelings about their job (satisfaction). It could be that in the context of the Nigerian economy, long-term career promises are perceived as less certain or less motivating than immediate job-related benefits.

Conclusion

Summary and Implications

This study concludes that job rotation is a valuable HRM tool, but its effectiveness in boosting performance is primarily channeled through its impact on core job characteristics and employee satisfaction. The results powerfully affirm the relevance of the Job Characteristics Model in a contemporary African banking context. For managers at Union Bank and similar organizations, the implication is clear: to maximize the ROI of job rotation, programs should be explicitly designed to enhance skill variety and reduce monotony. The focus should be on creating a more enriching and satisfying work experience in the present, as this appears to be the most direct route to improved performance.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is subject to several limitations. First, its cross-sectional design prevents us from making causal claims. A longitudinal study tracking employees before and after rotation would provide stronger evidence. Second, the reliance on self-reported performance data may be subject to common method bias. Future research should aim to incorporate objective performance metrics (e.g., sales targets, customer satisfaction scores). Finally, our study did not measure the mediating psychological states of the JCM directly. Future research could test the full mediated model to provide an even deeper understanding of the process.

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