

**LEVERAGING JOB ROTATION FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY IN SERVICE ORGANISATIONS IN NIGERIA**

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<https://doi.org/10.60787/maej.vol10i1.119-124>

**ABSTRACT**

*The imbalances of the labour market, especially those linked to soaring unemployment rates, high population, and poverty within Nigeria; have significantly impacted the power balance between employers and employees. Such have created work systems and environments where employees are constantly exploited. These have contributed to the problem of poor human sustainability in organisations. In addressing the stated problem, this paper examined the extent to which job rotation can be leveraged to enhance the outcome of human sustainability. The paper is designed as a theoretical paper, and its discussion of the concepts is anchored on Fredrick Herzberg's 1959 motivation-hygiene theory. In conclusion, it was affirmed that while job rotation is important in creating meaning and a purposeful work life for employees, it is yet imperative that such practices are modelled to reflect the core attributes and peculiarities of the organisation; ensuring that the adopted models and design of job rotation, sufficiently engage and address the actual human sustainability concerns and goals of the organisation.*

**Keywords: Job rotation, human sustainability, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, Nigerian service sector, Nigerian banking.**

**INTRODUCTION**

The well-being of the organisation's human resource is tied to the overall productivity and effectiveness of the organisation. Where organisations can address the development, growth and health of their people, their chances of attaining their purpose and objectives, tend to be higher (Tortia et al, 2022; Kramar, 2022). Unfortunately, the significance of human resource to the organisation has in recent times been increasingly distorted by related imbalances such as high population, unemployment, poverty and other related factors that impair the negotiating power of workers or their unions. These lower the value of the worker and thus, occasion their exploitation by employers and the organisation (Anugwom, 2007; Kalejaiye, 2014). The problem of poor human sustainability is such that has not only worsened the tensions in the employee-employer relationship but has also been identified as impacting their level of commitment and role performance (Fajana, 2011).

In Nigeria, practices such as contract staffing, poor reward and the lack of welfare, reflect some of the concerns of human exploitation. Such practices are more prolific among financial institutions, especially banks in Nigeria (Kalejaiye, 2014). Kalejaiye (2014) reported that more than 60% of the banking workforce in Nigeria are contract staff. These have created systems prone to insecurity and uncertainty. This is as workers, having no sense of placement, tend to be opportunistic, focusing on their own personal economic interest and always on the look out for better options or organisations to work for (Ajayi, 2011). Human sustainability describes the wellbeing and development of the individual. Within the organisation, it refers to the extent to which work systems are supportive and emphasize workers development, growth, skills and health. Its essence centres on the extent to which workers find value and meaning based on their experience at work or in the organisation (Kramaer, 2014).

Much research (Akbari & Maniel, 2017; Njoroge & Kwasira, 2013; Adekunle, 2017) addressing employee welfare and wellbeing, address only aspects and facets a much broader concern. While studies anchored on factors such as compensation, welfare schemes, training and job security can be considered useful, these however, only touch on aspects of a framework that demonstrates the general disposition of the organisation or employer toward the workers quality of work and life. Junca-Silva et al. (2017) argued that creating or conditioning work systems or environments for sustainability draws on extending or expanding workers' functional scope to be more engaging and rewarding. It involves creating functional formats that not only focus on the economic concerns of the worker but also reassure them of their value and significance to the organisation. One of such relates to work arrangements for flexibility and increased support, particularly job rotation (Junca-Silva et al., 2017; Akbari & Maniel, 2017).

This paper examines the extent to which job rotation can be leveraged in creating and conditioning a more conducive and supportive work environment for improved outcomes of human sustainability. The paper thus offers a theoretical evaluation of practices and experiences within the Nigerian service industry, highlighting related ills and emphasizing the imperatives of flexibility and support, such as facilitated by job rotation, in enhancing or enriching workers' experiences, relationships and meaning in the organisation. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Jibowo, 2007), is adopted as the theoretical premise in espousing the role and significance of job rotation for outcomes of human sustainability within the organisation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory**

Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, proposed in 1959, identified two categories of factors, which he labelled motivators (those capable of satisfying and thus motivating the workers), and hygiene (those which are necessary for preventing dissatisfaction) (Jibowo, 2007). Motivators captured core factors such as the content or nature of the work, recognition, responsibility and growth opportunities, while hygiene factors were identified as comprising salary, company policies, and supervision (Guerci et al, 2019; Aramide et al, 2013). Both categories are considered integral to the workers' disposition toward their roles and the organisation, offering balance in terms of their experience of meaning and purpose (motivation) and their welfare and economic well-being (hygiene) (Jibowo, 2007).

The motivation-hygiene theory demonstrates the significance of work features and the extent to which factors that necessitate the experiences of growth and responsibility are crucial in the motivation of the worker. While Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory has been critiqued for its simplicity (Jiang et al, 2012), it nonetheless, clarifies the imperatives for focus on working conditions, emphasizing key aspects of work that can be reinforced in enriching workers' sense of placement, belongingness and value to the organisation (Guerci et al, 2019). The theory, thus elaborates on the extent to which related facets of work, can be adapted to drive productivity, and effectiveness at the individual level; but more importantly, it demonstrates how management can integrate these facets, balancing motivators with hygiene factors to advance human sustainability.

### **Job Rotation**

Job rotation describes the job design and practice of moving or transferring workers across roles or functions within the same organisation or even across organisational branches (Akinnusi et al, 2017). The related advantages of job rotation are such that identify with the development of insight and increased knowledgeability of other functional aspects linked to or associated with their roles, the robustness of functions given the pool of employees who are acquainted with particular roles, enrichment due to increased responsibilities and new experiences in the organisation, and also, stronger levels of communication and correspondence across the organisation and also enhanced

levels of meaning and engagement for workers (Akbari & Maniel, 2017). The system is such that also assures role flexibility and operational robustness.

However, while the practice of job rotation is considered prevalent and commonplace within the context of most service organisations in Nigeria, its approach is more often targeted at creating stability and consistency in terms of operations and is hardly, structured given individual-level concerns of meaning, purpose or flexibility (Njoroge & Kwasire, 2013). Miebaka and Zeb-Obipi (2020) reported job rotation practices across most banks as such that focused on replicating performance or effectiveness across branches. For example, a worker who is identified as a high-performer in one bank could be transferred to another, same role, to replicate his performance and that way address the lapses or challenges of the bank to which he or she has been transferred. Similarly, workers are more often rotated as a way of compensating for staff strength, when a worker has left or has been sacked.

### **Human Sustainability**

Human sustainability prescribes an approach to management that identifies with the humane treatment of workers, and a focus on bettering their lives for improved behavioural, emotional and physical outcomes; all of which can also be channelled toward the performance and productivity of the organisation (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019). Diaz-Carrion et al (2020) posited that human sustainability refers to the deliberate conditioning of work features and relationships within the organisation to enrich the employees' experience and work-life; equipping them with the required skills, providing opportunities for their growth and enabling them the social and economic support for their effectiveness and wellbeing. Diaz-Carrion et al (2020) asserted that only physically and emotionally stable and healthy workers can thrive and match the pressure from the current competitive turbulence that today marks the Nigerian business environment.

Studies (Jarlstrom et al., 2018; Kramar, 2014; Podgorodnichenko et al., 2022; Manzoor et al, 2019) have pointed out several work-related lapses and areas of deficiency militating against the well-being and development of workers, within most organisations in Nigeria. These range from poor human resource policies to the lack of adequate workplace social infrastructure. Otoo (2019) noted that workers well-being, safety and comfort are taken very lightly, and yet still, they are forced to work under poor conditions such as involving poor power supply, This corroborates Kalejaiye's (2014) observation that despite increasing levels of insecurity and kidnapping across the country, there are scarcely any real commitments on the parts of most Nigerian organisations to step-up their workers safety and security. Such could come in the form of transport facilities and even the installation of tracking software and systems that can help monitor the movement and location of workers.

Liao et al (2022) posited that the concern for management today should emphasize ethics in people management. Ethics, according to Liao et al (2022), would serve as the lens through which management relates with and addresses its worker's issues. Currently, most service organisations are noted to take advantage of the irregularities that construe the labour market, and as Kalejaiye (2014) argued, are high-handed in their treatment of staff, given the population of unemployed and yet competent people available and ready to also take up the same roles at an even cheaper rate. These conditions have impacted negatively on the employer-employee relationship, and are also increasingly diffusing the strength and powers of unions. In 2021 alone, 1,936 workers were sacked by various banks across the country, while in 2024, 1000 staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria, were stated to have left the bank due to various challenges and concerns (Nigerian News Direct, 2022).

### **Job rotation and Human Sustainability**

The structure and practice of job rotation can offer much more and can be leveraged to drive human sustainability in Nigerian service organisations (Akbari & Maniel, 2017). Akbar and Maniel (2017) argued that the design of rotation should be such that assures new experiences, and that way, ensures that the workers' work is not monotonous. In this vein, rotations integrate concerns of new

skills, exposure and enrichment, ensuring that workers' rotational activities are such that allow for connection across the organisation. Akinnusi et al., (2017) stated that job rotation can also be used to strengthen the extent of social support and also reinforce cohesion within the workplace; thus, it could also be considered a mechanism for effectively addressing diversity and inter-group relations. Akbar and Maniel (2017) further noted that job rotation is also useful for furthering employee integration and strengthening the extent of employees' feelings or experience of membership in the organisation.

Related research (Adekunle, 2017; Akbari & Maniel, 2017) affirms the significance of job rotation to employee learning and skill acquisition. This is because employees can connect with other more experienced and competent workers, and knowledge and skills are easily transferred or shared across the organisation. As Akbar and Maniel (2017) argued, adapting work features, arrangements or designs, should draw on the peculiarities and unique attributes of the organisation. Designs such as job rotation should therefore emerge from the particular gaps in the functioning of the organisation, or should also be structured to address specific goals such as that of human sustainability. This follows Junca-Silva et al (2017) position that in leveraging on structures or practices, organisations must first understand how much can be patterned or redesigned to suit their particular concerns and needs. This is essential in ensuring that such are detailed to match and that way, contribute as intended to the preferred outcomes at the individual and organisational level.

## CONCLUSION

This paper identified related contextual conditions that have contributed to the impaired and imbalanced relationship between employers and employees; such that have also led to outcomes of poor sustainability in most service organisations in Nigeria. Key sights from the paper centred on (a) the prevalence of such imbalances arising from the market and the impact of such on management and leadership dispositions toward employees (b) the imperatives of ethics in people management within the Nigerian service sector and as a way of ensuring compliance to fair treatment and conditions for employees, and (c) the imperatives of leveraging job rotation as a means of also advancing healthier and more supportive systems that equip workers with necessary skills, contributes to their development; enriching their jobs and work experience.

It is therefore the conclusion of this paper that Nigerian service organisations stand to gain substantially from the practice and design of job rotation; especially such specifically structured in line with their operational features and concerns. The effective leveraging of job rotation should therefore integrate key considerations such as the nature of service, the hierarchy and power structure of the organisation, staff strength of the organisation, and also other related characteristics of the job. Through such considerations and modelling of the practice, organisations can structure their related practice to not only drive the human sustainability concerns of the organisation but also maintain focus on the productivity and effectiveness goals and objectives of the organisation.

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