

The Effect of Job Rotation on Career Development of Administrative Staff in Sri Lankan Universities

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Abstract

Though organizations adopt career development (CD) as a strategy to motivate and retain employees, the administrative staff in Sri Lankan universities is stagnated in lower-level positions in the hierarchy thus, higher positions remain vacant due to the scant number of applicants. Drawing upon the employee learning theory and social learning theory of career counselling, this study investigates the possibility of using job rotation (JR) as a strategy to spur administrative staff for CD since lateral movement among administrative jobs is possible. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to find the impact of JR on CD. Since the Sri Lankan university system consists of old and new universities based on whether they were established before or after 1990, the study attempts to identify differences in JR and CD between the two groups. The study randomly selected three universities from each group where the population was 195 administrative staff. The sample consists of purposely selected 130 administrative staff that includes 80 from old universities. The response rate for the structured questionnaire was 53 percent. JR was assessed by two variables namely, interest in JR and JR rate while CD by promotional rate, adopting previously tested and validated measures. The study employed a 4-item scale for the interest in JR. The JR rate, the frequency of lateral transfers among jobs, was measured by dividing the number of rotations by the number of years of tenure in the universities. The promotional rate, the frequency of promotions, was measured by dividing the number of promotions by the number of years of tenure. Results of the t-test report no significant difference in focal variables between old and new universities. Results of multiple regression ($F=5.55$, $p<.01$; $R\text{-square}=.15$, $p<.05$) report that though interest in JR positively influences CD ($\beta=.33$, $p<.01$), there is no significant influence from JR rate ($\beta=-.04$, $p=.77$). Hence, the interest in JR is conducive to CD. However, the number of rotations does not influence CD. This may be due to the extemporary rotation or use of JR as a sanction, arousing negative perception among those who were frequently rotated. Accordingly, though the frequent job rotations will not be an appropriate strategy, the universities can encourage administrative staff for CD by influencing their interest in JR. Also, the interest in JR, policies and practices of JR, and CD are uniform across the old and new universities, demanding a common endeavour to address the prevailing issue

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