



# MOVE AND LEARN: PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF JOB ROTATION IN A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## ABSTRACT

*Job rotation in an organization is a strategic concern of human resource. Public hospitals in the Philippines employ job rotation to further improve their services. The practice is also recommended by the Civil Service Commission, the central human resource management office of the government for the personnel to promote greater flexibility at work. The paper analyzes and measures the perception of government hospital personnel on job rotation as a means to improve employee productivity. Using the descriptive research method, predesigned questionnaires, interview, personal observation and data mining, the study found that a) majority of the respondents are female; b) many are college graduates; and c) almost ninety percent (90) of the personnel have been working in the institution for more than 5 years. The study also showed that some of the benefits of job rotation are; a) improved interpersonal relationship; b) flexibility at work; c) reduced work stress; and d) improved employee efficiency. The greatest challenge is the inappropriate use of personnel rotation by management and inability to adjust to equipment handling. Meanwhile, Spearman correlation test showed significant positive association between length of service and perceived benefits of job rotation. The study may be replicated in other government agencies using different sample population to determine possible variation of findings using varied government sectors with different nature of works.*

**Key words:** human resource management, organization, productivity, Philippines

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Job rotation in an organization is a strategic concern of human resource to enhance and develop employee's performance and productivity (Schultz 2010). It is a lateral movement of employees between jobs (Nwachukwu CC; 1988). It is considered as the best practice in training (Koontz & Mills, 1984) by every public and private organization. It is also a means for the enhancement of basic practical education to overcome inefficiencies and maximize outputs (Atif & Rand Nadeem 2011). It involves the systematic movement of employees from one job to another (Arya & Mittendorf, 2014; Baro, 2012; Kaymaz, 2010) or any change in assignment, job content or department within the organization (Lazim, Faridahwati & Subramaniam, 2013; Syukri, Arsiah & Dousin, 2013) for the employees to gain familiarity on the operations of various units (Edward 2005). Job rotation promotes the acquisition of new skills (Bhorat & Hinks, 2006) as well as increase in output (Jaturanonda et al 2006).

There are numerous benefits that the organization gains from implementing job rotation (Eriksson and Ortega 2004, Campion et al 1994). Through job rotation, boredom and exhaustion resulting from repetitive job tasks and absenteeism are minimized (Jorgensen et al. 2006) while at the same time increasing innovativeness, productivity and loyalty among employees (Malinski 2002). For Bennet (2003), job rotation accelerates cross-functional development of employees, elevates expertise and understanding.

Job rotation has its limitations including the perceived increase in the workload of remaining staff (State Services Commission, 1999). Other difficulties identified are the refusal of experienced staff to use the assigned equipment (Malinski, 2002); and unwanted physical and psychological stress arising from problems in the work environment (Qureshi et al., 2013).

Job rotation is an excellent way for the organization to develop managers, executives, and employees with technical know-how (Beatty et al., 1987). It is also observed to increase their motivation and enthusiasm, and create trust between staff and management.

According to Sayujigbe & Amusat (2012) employees' performance is a product of their training and improved productivity (Grund 2001). Employees' performance can be categorized into three different types namely; trait-based information; behavior-based information; and result-based information (Mathis and Jackson 2003). Employee performance is crucial. One's performance is often reflected in his/her capacity to accomplish the tasks at hand and his/her contribution towards the attainment of the set goals and objectives (Nafei 2014). Performance improvement is not only the result of well-functioning system but also of human resource strategies that enables the recruitment and maintenance of committed and motivated workforce (Al-Ahmadi 2005). Meanwhile, several criteria are needed to evaluate job performance of an employee accurately (Ivancevich 1988). Using this argument, job rotation is likened to a system where policies are administered, productivity is managed, and performance is measured and evaluated (Opatha 2002).

In the Philippines, a Citizen's Charter was created by the government to ensure high standard of public service and performance among government employees. It sets the guideline on how a particular service should be delivered with due consideration to the time spent and

the quality of delivery. Accordingly, Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2019-001 series of 2019 was issued, or the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 11032 also known as the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018”. The Rule III Section 1 of the Act mandates the streamlining of government services to wit;

*“All agencies which provide government services shall undertake compliance to cost analysis, conduct time and motion studies, undergo evaluation and improvement of all their government services, and reengineer the same, if deemed necessary, to reduce bureaucratic red tape and processing time, and to promote efficiency and simplicity of processes.”* (Rule III Section 1 of RA 11032)

This act ensures that government service, regardless of the nature thereof must ensure that turn-around time and increased level of performance be the primary consideration in public office. Thus, job rotation as a means to improve productivity is a common workplace scenario in the Philippine bureaucracy. This management strategy is guided by the principles of fairness, equality and good faith.

The Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) is a 210-bed government hospital which operates by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 1823 issued on January 16, 1981. It is a specialized tertiary level hospital that caters to the needs of patients with pulmonary-related problems. The institution is commitment to carry on top quality and affordable medical care to thousands of Filipinos.

At present, the LCP has 18 offices/departments, 613 plantilla positions, 186 job order positions, and 325 DOH augmentation (LCP Annual report 2019). Several personnel have been engaged in job rotation with the objective of providing the Filipino people state-of-the-art specialized care for lung and other chest diseases through excellent service (LCP Mission & Vision). A change process where development and participation of joint ventures is made faster and more robust through sharing of diverse resources, which can easily be achieved through job rotation.

### **1.1. Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to identify the benefits and challenges of job rotation to employees’ performance in the Lung Center of the Philippines for the last three years. Specifically, this study intends to accomplish the following: a) describe the demographic profile of the respondents; b) describe the benefits of job rotation in the Lung Center of the Philippines; c) determine the significant association of the length of service to the perceived benefits of job rotation in the Lung Center of the Philippines; d) describe the challenges encountered while administering job rotation in the Lung Center of the Philippines; and e) Provide policy recommendation to improve job rotation.

### **1.2. Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the theory that gives emphasis on employees’ performance resulting from job rotation. According to Eriksson and Ortega (2004), “employees who experienced job rotation accumulate more human capital because they are exposed to a wider range of experience”. The more an employee moves, the more he learns. This is the employee learning theory which argues that an employee who rotates through several different positions within an organization has the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge that he or she would not otherwise develop (Bennet, 2003). The more an employee moves from one job to another within the same organization she/he tends to learn the tricks or skills of managing the different functions of the different departments that she is assigned or “rotated” making her/him well-versed in managing or doing not only one job but also in other jobs.

This theory also posits that the success of the organization depends on the employees' acquired skills and the employees' effectiveness at learning new skills and knowledge connected with the kind of learning technique the organization adopts. The study asserts that job rotation is an appropriate learning technique that would provide improvement in the performance of personnel in the subject hospital. That acquisition of new knowledge through job rotation is significant to the operation of the organization as it determines efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Job rotation as part of the organizational strategy in providing skills and training to employees help them adapt to new work assignment and improvement in performing the traditional routine functions. The exposure to new workplace problem-solving scenario makes an old employee adjust to the new problem encountered by the organization and this could be done through job rotation.

### 1.3. Conceptual Framework

Aspect of job rotation includes familiarity with organizational policies and procedures. Through engagement in different tasks and units, an employee is able to discover and instill to him/herself facts about his employer. Skills are also modified as well as relationship with others. Skills in solving problem, management and supervision also improve. Job rotation is also an opportunity for internship. Built-in expertise and multi-functional capability and other benefits of job rotation. However, challenges come across and certain limitations run against job rotation.

The use of job rotation may be perceived as positive or negative. The organization may create benefits by implementing job rotation at the same time, challenges employees and management. When these challenges and benefits are appropriately managed by the learners and the learning supervisors, that would create productivity and increase in job performance. It then led to the benefit of the public-clienteles. The goals of job rotation are in accordance with the changes in scientific advances, technological and economic development in the world (Bennet 2003).

Job rotation therefore can be evaluated through the benefits it posed to employees' job performance and the challenges encountered in its administration. By knowing the benefits and challenges of job rotation to the employees' performance, it would guide public administrators how to best serve the public. The conceptual framework of the paper is presented in this wise, to wit;

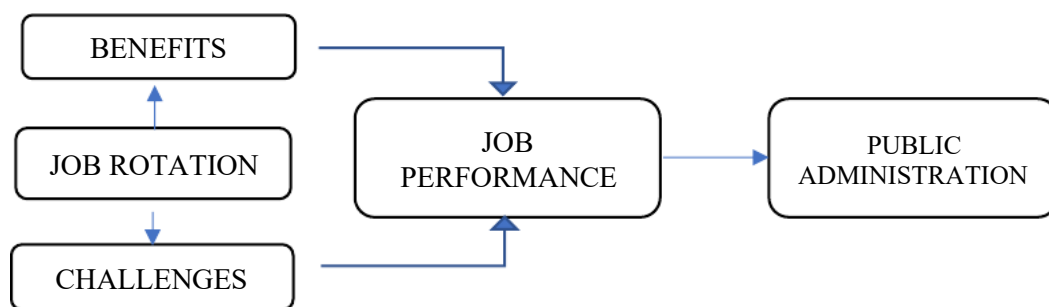


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive–quantitative research design to examine the benefits of job rotation, the challenges encountered in administering job rotation, and the significant association between the length of service and the benefits of job rotation in the Lung Center of the Philippines. Descriptive research represents detailed profile of persons, procedures or

conditions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Meanwhile, to measure the strength of relationship between two ordinal variables (Allen, 2017) the Spearman's rank-order correlation was employed.

The researcher utilized purposive sampling method to extract the data from the applicable population. Particularly, the following criteria were used: a) Personnel of LCP who are involved in the administration of job rotation; b) Personnel who are in personnel services division; and c) Regular employees.

The study relied on primary data using questionnaires. It is a suitable tool for collecting data (Kothari, 2004). Moreover, as to the degree of reliability of the instrument, a pilot study involving 20 respondents from other offices other than the target population were done with a retrieval rate of 100%. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.85 was computed using SPSS 21.0. Overall, there are 51 respondents who participated in the study.

The data gathered were triangulated using data mining and analysis of documents such as Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCR) and other documents available. An interview and field observation were also conducted for data triangulation. Meanwhile, data organization and descriptive analysis were made using SPSS 21.0 and Microsoft Excel.

## 2.1 Study Locale

The sample population is located in the Philippines. Its google map description is presented below.



Figure 2. Study Locale

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented below.

**Table 1** Distribution of the Respondents by Age and Gender

Profile		Frequency	Percent
N = 51			
Gender	Female	34	66.67
	Male	17	33.33
Age	61 - 65	1	1.96
	51 - 60	22	43.14
	41 - 50	17	33.33
	31 - 40	9	17.65
	21 - 30	2	3.92

Out of 51 respondents, 34 are female (66.67%) and 17 are male (33.33%). It shows that majority of the respondents in the personnel services who are in charge of job rotation activities of LCP are female.

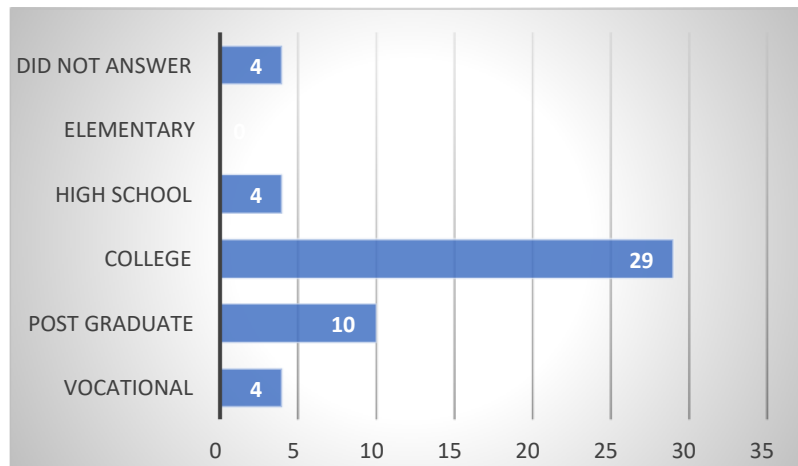
Meanwhile the data show that 43.14% of the respondents are aged 51 to 60 years old while 33.33% are under 41 to 50 years of age. There is also one respondent (1.96%) who is between 61 to 65 years old, and two respondents (3.92%) who are aged 21 to 30, while only 9 respondents (17.65%) are in between 31 to 40 years old.

The results show that majority of those in -charged of job rotation activity are aged 41 years above which indicates that either they have significant experiences in personnel services or have been working with the LCP for several years now. This means that majority of the respondents are knowledgeable of the system and processes of the institution already. This is supported by Bennet (2003) when he says “expertise and greater understanding elevates while on job rotation”. Contrary to the study of Gabriel et al.(2020) on millennial managers where acquisition of soft skills is a significant prerequisite for managing older employees. In this particular finding, job rotation is most likely related to age and years in the organization.

### 3.2. Highest Educational Attainment

According to the data gathered, 29 out of 51 respondents (56.86%) are College graduates while 10 respondents (19.61%) are either studying for Post Graduate course or already have their Post Graduate degrees. Meanwhile there are 4 respondents (7.84%) who are graduates of High School and 4 who have also taken Vocational courses. It can also be noticed that there are 4 respondents who did not answer on the question.

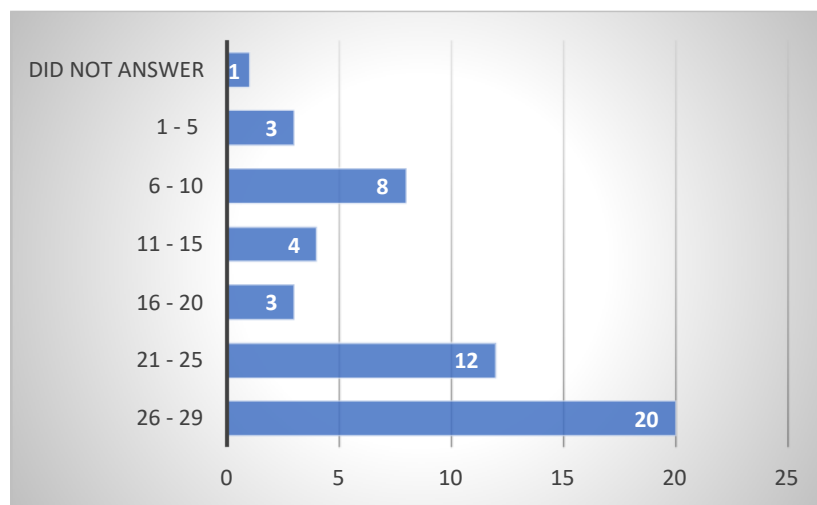
Based on the results, most of the respondents have college or post graduate degrees which indicates the professionalization of the positions of government offices. According to Nafei (2014); achievement and goals and objectives of the organization is measured by performance of its human resources. This means that the most important resource of the organization is its human resource. That is why all organizations must provide strategic focused on the development of skills and knowledge of individual employees which would redound to the overall development of organization (Janiak, 2017). The data also shows that the public offices consider the technicalities and specialization of the positions which can be observed through the post graduates and vocational graduates’ distribution of the respondents. This development in government service is an enhancement of the basic practical education to overcome inefficiencies and maximize outputs (Atif & Rand Nadeem 2011). Not to mention that public offices or positions have different levels and standards set by the Civil Service Commission, the central human resource agency of the Philippine public service.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of the respondents by Highest Educational Attainment

### 3.3. Length of Service

The data of the distribution by the length of service is presented on the next table. Based on the table, 20 out of 51 respondents (39.22%) are serving between 26 to 29 years, while 12 respondents (23.53%) are in their 21 to 25 years of service in the LCP. Only three respondents (5.88%) have served less than 5 years and eight respondents (15.69%) have been in the LCP for 6 to 10 years already, while there is only one respondent who did not answer the question.



**Figure 4.** Distribution of the respondents by Length of Service

It can be gleaned from the results of the earlier findings on Age profile of the respondents that those who have long years of experience with the institution tend to be more adept of the system operation and the culture of the agency. It supports the argument that job rotation makes employees engage in different tasks and gain new skills (Bhorat & Hinks, 2006). This means that the respondents are capable of providing accurate details, observations, and insights on the system of the institution, particularly with regards to job rotation. The age profile of the respondents also shows that their presence in the public institution and the relative length of service made them more inclined to participate in the job rotation activity. This has slight difference with employee learning theory which suggests that for a given level of tenure in the firm, employees who had previous work experience in the same industry are probably better trained and should therefore rotate less frequently (Ericson and Ortega, 2006)

### 3.4. Experience and Agreement of Respondents on Job Rotation

The researcher included the experience of the respondents and their agreement on job rotation in the profile to have an initial assessment of their perception on job rotation. Presented on the next table is the distribution of the respondents by experience and agreement on job rotation.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the Respondents by Experience and Agreement on Job Rotation

Profile		Frequency	Percent
N = 51			
Have you experienced job rotation?	No	5	9.80
	Yes	41	80.39
	Did not answer	5	9.80
Are you in favor of personnel rotation?	No	4	7.84
	Yes	36	70.59
	Did not answer	11	21.57

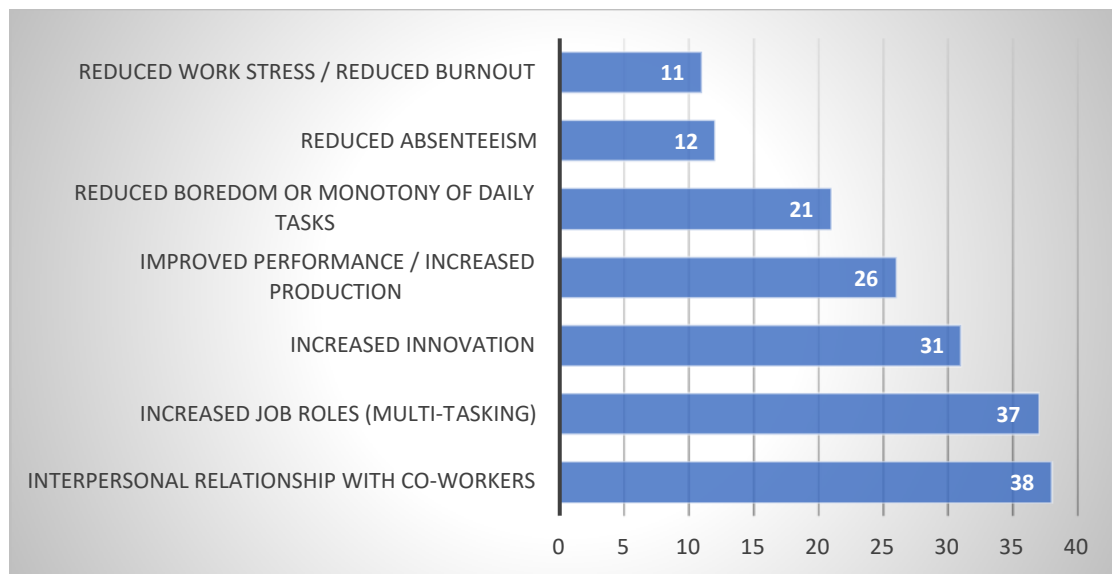
The data on the table shows that 80.39% of the respondents have experienced job rotation in their work, while 9.80% have not yet experienced it, and also 9.80% gave no answer. It means that majority of the respondents can provide the assessment of the benefits and challenges of job rotation because they have experienced it at hand.

On the Agreement of the respondents, 36 out of 51 (70.59%) answered that they are in favor of personnel job rotation while 7.84% answered “No”. It can also be noticed that there are 21.57% who chose not to answer the question which either show that they neither agree nor disagree, or that they do not have the decision yet that is why they avoided to answer the question. Either way, majority of the respondents express their agreement of having job rotation. This has perhaps a product of their perception that the changing and more complex operation of an ever increasing organization requires the employees to better adapt with the changing demands of the public. This is most especially during pandemic where the health system in general is challenged by the volume of people seeking health services. This scenario would most likely require more innovation and knowledge that would be gotten from the training and therefore job rotation. In fact, according to the employee learning argument, “we should expect job rotation to be more likely when employees have more need to be trained” (Ericson and Ortega, 2006). It is in consonance to the findings that job rotation can build trust and confidence between staff and management that can result in improve job performance (Bei, 2009). Moreover, the majority of the respondent-employees is most likely considered the effects of job rotation positively than negatively.

### 3.5. Benefits of Job Rotation to Employees’ Performance

In this part, the respondents were asked to check as many as applicable on the checklist of benefits provided or they may add other benefits they may think of. The benefits or the positive effects of job rotation based on the respondents are presented on the following figure.





**Figure 5.** Distribution of the respondents by Benefits of Job Rotation to Employee's Performance

It can be observed on the figure that the first benefit of job rotation according to the respondents is the "Interpersonal Relationship with Co-workers" (38 out of 51 or 74.51%), followed by the "Increased Job Roles" (37 out of 51 or 72.55%), the third is "Increased Innovation" (31 out of 51 or 60.78%), the fourth in rank is "Improved Performance/Increased Production" (26 out of 51 or 50.98%) while the seventh or the last in rank is the "Reduced Work Stress/ Reduced Burnout" (11 out of 51 or 21.57%).

The top benefit of job rotation according to the respondents is "they are able to improve their interpersonal relationship with their co-workers" for they are able to meet different personnel during job rotation. Despite the largeness of the institution in terms of size and population, through personnel rotation they are able to mingle with different workers and get to know them more. The employee learning brought about by job rotation does not only refer to technical and conceptual learning. The data show that more than hard skills is the learning of soft skills significant to maintaining harmony in the organization (Gabriel et al.2020)

Moreover, the respondents believe that through job rotation they are able to experience different job roles making them more flexible at work, honing their multi-tasking skills. This is aligned with the findings of Jaturanonda (2006) that job rotation promotes the acquisition of new skills and qualifications and increase in the output. This also has something to do with the third in rank which is "Increased Innovation." Since the personnel are able to experience different job roles, they have more chances to acquire different skills and increase their innovativeness based on the job roles they would have. This would make an employee more of a generalist. Thus strengthening the belief that employee learning through job rotation "trains him to become a generalist" (Ericson and Ortega, 2006).

By their experience of different job roles and functions, the respondents see that their performances improve as they gain more skills. Therefore, they also increase their production in the workplace. This explains the fourth benefit that the respondents chose.

The least ranked in the benefits of job rotation is the "Reduced Work Stress/ Reduced Burnout." It can be noticed that only 11 respondents believe that this belongs to the benefits of job rotation. It only means that majority of the respondents do not consider this as benefit of job rotation, because according to most of the respondents they perform different roles and functions during job rotation and it does not mean reduced workloads. In fact, the personnel

need to learn more of the different functions to be able to perform well which adds to their challenges encountered in job rotation.

During the interview conducted, when the respondents were asked if the personnel rotation increased their confidence and motivation as an employee of the LCP, 42 of the respondents (82.35%) answer affirmatively on this question. Likewise, when asked if the personnel's self-efficiency and morale were boosted by the job rotation, 56.86% answered "Yes". Therefore, these results confirm the positive benefits of job rotation activity as perceived by the respondents. Even though there are challenges and issues on job rotation the personnel still see the positive effects of job rotation in their performance as public servants.

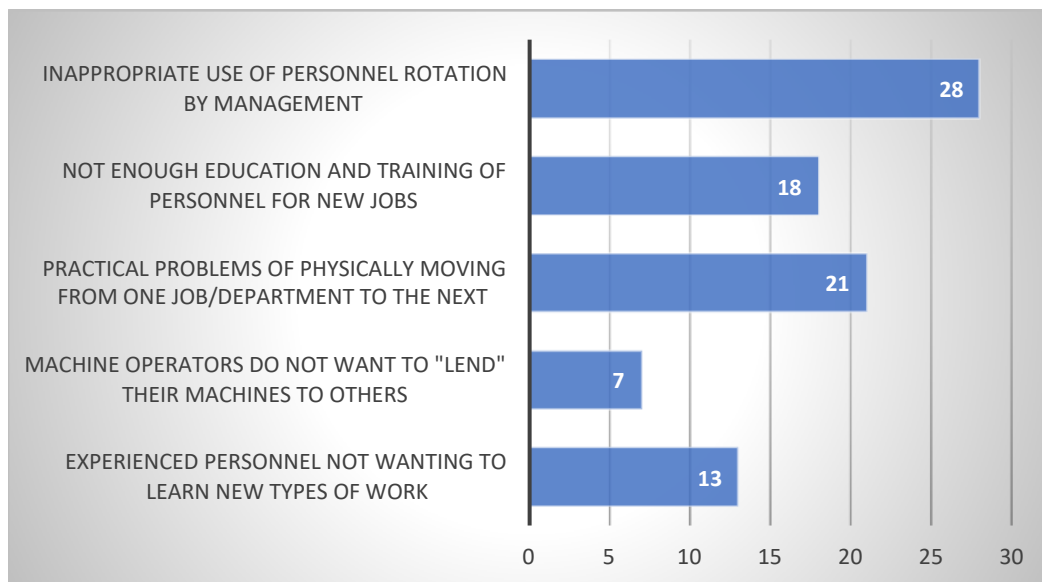
In this connection, the study of Tannenbaum (1997) found that job rotation improved the participant competencies applied in the job which in turn makes him eligible for management rewards making him more motivated to perform and seek another job rotation opportunity. Job rotation creates a domino of positive effects at work.

### 3.6. Significant Association of Length of Service to Perceived Benefits of Job Rotation

Using IBM-SPSS 21.0 the Spearman Rank analysis generated  $r_s(49) = 0.914, p = 0.0107$ . The results of the Spearman correlation indicated that there was a significant positive association between length of service and perceived benefits of job rotation. It indicates that as the years of experience increases the more that the personnel of the Lung Center of the Philippines perceived that job rotation improves interpersonal relationship with co-workers, and enhanced their work expertise through the increased job roles.

### 3.7. Challenges Encountered while Administering Job Rotations

The challenges encountered by the respondents while administering job rotations are presented on the next figure.



**Figure 6.** Distribution of the respondents by Challenges Encountered while Administering Job Rotations

It can be observed on the figure that the top challenge encountered by the respondents is the "Inappropriate Use of Personnel Rotation by the Management" (28 out of 51 or 54.90%), the second in rank is "Practical Problems of Physically Moving from One Job/Department to

the Next” (21 out of 51 or 41.18%), while the third one is “Not Enough Education and Training of Personnel for New Jobs” (18 out of 51 or 35.29%). The least in rank in the challenges encountered is “Machine Operators Do Not Want to Lend their Machines to Others” (7 out of 51 or 13.73%).

According to most of the respondents, they believe that the management most of the times apply job rotation inappropriately in terms of the frequency of job rotation. It is supported by the answers of the participants during the interview since majority of the participants answered that they believe that it is not advisable to be rotated several times. Likewise, majority of the respondents have experienced job rotation more than three times already which made them think that the management is executing job rotation inappropriately. In fact, in the study made by Malinski (2002) it was found that the implementation of job rotation encountered several difficulties such as resistance by experienced staff which support the employee learning theory that intellectual capital risk are observed during job rotation (Burnold and Durst 2012). This is corollary to the study on millennial managers where one of the most challenging tasks as a manager is to handle old employee involving interpersonal conflict with his co- employees ( Gabriel et al. 2020). Job rotation if properly executed, has positive effects on employees’ motivation provided that the management have prepared the employees for it, they defined the most productive position for the employee, and equipped them with knowledge and skills for the job (Kaymaz, 2010). Job rotation must be judiciously done and implemented.

The second challenge for the respondents is mostly due to the practicality of changing the function or job roles of an employee. Since some of the position requires technical skills, other personnel new to the job would need to undergo training to acquire the skills needed for the job, and this is just not practical to apply to all kinds of position. This also supports the third challenge that the respondents ranked which also concurs to the study of Kaymaz (2010).

The least in the ranking of challenges encountered indicates that few of the respondents believe that it is one of the issues in job rotation when the actual machine operators do not want other personnel to use the equipment. This challenge is somehow related to the second ranked challenge which also shows the impracticality of job rotation in some of the positions in the LCP. Most of the times it applies to positions requiring technical knowledge such as equipment operator. Since hospital or office equipment have actual personnel in charge of them, these personnel most likely believe in accountability principles which affects their agreement to lend others the equipment.

Job rotation is a management technique that aims to improve employees’ performance. However, part of the bureaucratic principles of Weber (1966) is the division of labor and the specialization of government employee for the effective performance of its duties and functions. Therefore, most likely there will always be challenges and issues to be encountered once it is applied in the public service.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Implementation of job rotation provides learning opportunities among experienced personnel in terms of age and length of service. Moreover, female employees marked significant number over male- employees. Results also show that majority of the employees involve in job rotation are professional or college graduates. Experienced employees favors job rotation.

Job rotation benefits the individual employee and the organization. It is associated to higher productivity and improve performance. Some would consider interpersonal relationship, enhancement of expertise as some of its benefits.

Some challenges are also identified by the respondents. The inappropriate use of personnel rotation as a means to manage employees but beyond the usual interval or frequency. Some of

the respondents consider the use of machine and equipment as a means to hinder fast learning experiences of participants to job rotation.

Nonetheless, job rotation positively benefited not just employees but also management. A well organized and proper handling of personnel by providing opportunities that enhance employees' capacity and capability. Job rotation increases the bar of performance in the public service. Appropriate and correctly implemented job rotation plan and program would also improve the job performance based on the perception of the participants. Job rotation is an important segment of performance management that has considerable influence on the manner public employees are performing their public functions.

It can be confirmed that job rotation has a positive effect on employees' performance (Rothwell et al 1994). Despite of the challenges encountered during job rotation, benefits to employees prevail through the means of enhancing the value of work experience for career development (Campion et al 1994).

## 5. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended for effective implementation of job rotation in Lunch Center of the Philippines (LCP):

Inappropriate use of personnel rotation by management. This could be done by scheduling of job rotation for the employees' preparedness upon implementation.

Opportunity for all qualified employees regardless of age and length of service to be included in the job rotation activities when their functions warrant. Personnel for job rotation must be ensured that all participants must be given proper training and skills.

Personnel serving the institution for quite sometimes /long years may undergo training on the importance of job rotation. This is most especially on the part of new innovation and techniques that are commonly not adaptable to the mind set of veteran - employees.

The idea of owning the machine and equipment preventing an employee to lend them to co-employees during job rotation thereby substantially prevent rotation. It can be remedied by making the rank and file machine operator understands that a shift in accountability may be done from the operator himself to another. Mishandling thereof may be compensated either against the actual possessor or the new participant to job rotation. In both cases, accountability to the machine remains enforced.

For future researchers, the study may be replicated in some other government agencies using different sample population to determine possible variation of findings using different government sectors and having different nature of jobs performed.

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