



Job Rotation as a Strategy to Increase Employee Productivity at PT SMART Tbk: A Case Study in The Transport Division

Irwan Mutaqin^{1*}, Rini Mulyani Sari²

¹²Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani, Cimahi, Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail: irwanmutaqin@mm.unjani.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the implementation of job rotation as a strategic approach to human resource (HR) development to improve employee productivity in the Transportation Division of PT SMART Tbk. A qualitative approach with descriptive case study method was used. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of job rotation practices. The results showed that job rotation has a positive impact on the development of technical and managerial competencies, reducing work boredom, and increasing employee motivation. However, the implementation still faces challenges such as employee resistance to assignment in certain locations and lack of integration between job rotation policies and central HR systems. To overcome these challenges, the company has initiated employee mapping based on competencies, experience, and personal aspirations, and developed a talent pool concept. This study recommends developing an employee mapping dashboard to support data-driven decision-making, integrating job rotation policies with HR strategies, and improving communication to enhance employee engagement. These steps will optimise job rotation as a strategic tool for HR development and operational efficiency.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The palm oil industry is one of the main sectors that support the Indonesian economy. As the world's largest palm oil producer, Indonesia plays an important role in meeting global vegetable oil demand. The Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) noted that crude palm oil (CPO) production reached 45.1 million tonnes, with Indonesia ranking first in palm oil exports (Jenkins, 2023). The industry's prominence is supported by the availability of abundant natural resources, a large labour force, and conducive government policies. In addition, global demand for palm oil continues to rise, fuelled by population growth and increased purchasing power in many developing countries (Yuslaini, 2023).

Despite its huge potential, the palm oil industry in Indonesia faces various challenges, particularly in the management of human resources (HR). One of the main challenges is the limited skills and expertise of the labour force in this sector. Work in the palm oil industry is often strenuous and risky, while labour wages tend to be lower than in other sectors. In addition, the working environment is often prone to social conflicts and disputes. Therefore, human resource development is crucial to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry (Bagus, 2023).

In this context, PT SMART Tbk, as one of the largest palm oil companies in Indonesia, faces challenges in managing human resources, especially in the Transport Division which is responsible for the distribution of crops. Based on the 2023 Engagement Temperature Check (ETC) survey, it was found that many employees felt underappreciated, lacked opportunities for growth, and were limited in accessing adequate work resources. This condition causes employee stagnation, lowers motivation, and has the potential to increase turnover which can negatively impact the company's operational efficiency (Golden Agri-Resources, 2023).

One strategy that can be implemented to overcome this challenge is job rotation. Human resource rotation allows employees to gain broader work experience, understand various aspects of the company's operations, and increase their engagement and job satisfaction. However, the implementation of job rotations also faces various challenges, such as potential disruptions in teamwork relationships as well as the risk of increased resignation rates if rotations are not managed properly (Mekari, 2022).

By understanding these problems, this study aims to explore the application of job rotation as a strategy in improving employee productivity in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide insights for companies in designing effective HR rotation policies to create a more dynamic, productive, and sustainable work environment (Putra & Silfiana, 2022).

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive case study approach. This approach was chosen to understand the phenomenon of HR rotation in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk in depth. This method allows the exploration of various aspects of job

rotation by exploring employee experiences and company policies through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Moleong, 2017).

This research is designed to examine how job rotation affects employee productivity. The study focuses on PT SMART Tbk with data collection strategies that include in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation studies (Hidayat, 2024).

The data used in this study consisted of:

1. Employees who experienced HR rotation, to understand the direct impact of this policy.
2. Employees who did not experience HR rotation, to compare their experiences and perceptions.
3. Strategic decision-makers, including the Service Director, Head of Transport, and HRBP involved in the HR rotation policy.

Several techniques were used to ensure the data obtained was accurate and in-depth, namely:

1. In-depth interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees and management to gain insight into the experience and impact of HR rotations.
2. Non-participatory observation: Direct observation of the work environment was conducted to understand the dynamics of job rotation without the intervention of the researcher.
3. Field notes: Documentation of observation and interview results to support the analysis process.
4. Triangulation: Combining various data collection techniques to increase the validity of the research results.

The data obtained was analysed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes several stages:

1. Data Collection: Data were collected systematically through interviews, observations, and documents.
2. Data Reduction: Irrelevant data was eliminated, while important information was summarised and categorised based on key themes.
3. Data Presentation: The reduced data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives, diagrams, or tables to facilitate understanding of the relationships between concepts.
4. Inference Drawing: Findings are analysed to identify key patterns that can provide recommendations for HR rotation policies at PT SMART Tbk.

With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive insight into the implementation of job rotation and its impact on employee productivity in the transport sector of the palm oil industry.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study describe how job rotation is implemented as a human resource (HR) development strategy in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk. Data

collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis show various dynamics related to the implementation of job rotation, including the role of the Transport Division, HR management policies, challenges faced, and strategies to optimise the rotation program.

The Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk has a crucial role in ensuring the smooth distribution of oil palm harvest from plantations to mills and export ports. With a wide operational scope, covering Sumatra, Kalimantan, Papua, and even a project in Liberia, the Transport Division faces complex geographical and logistical challenges. In 2023, the division managed approximately 2,254 trucks with a workforce of 3,802 people, which is projected to increase to 4,206 people by 2024.

One of the major projects that will start in 2025 is Total Asset Management (TAM) or Central Workshop, which will expand the Transport Division's responsibilities in vehicle maintenance and repair, from 2,518 assets to 9,077 assets. With greater responsibilities, job rotation is one of the important strategies to increase the flexibility and competence of human resources in this division.

So far, job rotation in the Transport Division has not been implemented systematically and tends to be reactive to operational needs. An interview with the Head of Transport Sumatra showed that operational effectiveness can be increased if job rotation is done with careful planning, integrating company needs with individual development. However, current rotations are still done sporadically, resulting in an imbalance in labour distribution and a lack of uniform standards.

The impact of the lack of variety in tasks and work locations is also starting to be felt in the form of employee stagnation. An interview with the Service Director revealed that a lack of dynamism in work can lead to a decrease in motivation and productivity, which ultimately impacts the overall performance of the Transport Division.

HR management has an important role in determining job rotation policies. Currently, rotations are based more on immediate needs rather than long-term planning that considers employee competency development. The Head of Transport Papua stated that many rotation decisions are made to fill vacant positions, without considering the benefits of rotation in the long term.

However, remedial measures have begun to be taken by mapping employees based on education, experience and career aspirations. HRBP revealed that this initiative aims to create a more targeted rotation policy and provide development opportunities for employees.

The implementation of job rotation faced several challenges, including:

1. Employee resistance to shifting work locations, especially to more remote areas such as Papua and Liberia.
2. Lack of uniform rotation policy standards across operational units, leading to inconsistencies in implementation.
3. Negative perceptions of job rotation, which is still perceived as a form of punishment rather than a career development opportunity.

To overcome this challenge, HR management implemented a more personalised communication approach. Interviews with Service Directors showed that by providing an understanding of the benefits of rotation, employees were more open to change. For example, an employee who initially refused to be transferred to Papua finally accepted the rotation after being given an explanation of the competency development opportunities he would get.

Job rotation has the potential to improve employees' technical and managerial skills. A case study of an employee who was transferred from head office to Liberia showed that the new experience helped improve his interpersonal skills and operational understanding. In addition, job rotation also helps to overcome job boredom and increase the spirit of innovation in the work environment.

Evaluation of employees who have undergone rotation is an important step in ensuring the effectiveness of this policy. Interviews with the Service Director emphasised that evaluation is conducted through post-rotation interviews to understand the employee's experience as well as the impact of the rotation on their performance. The results of these evaluations are then used to adjust future rotation strategies.

One of the initiatives being developed by the Transport Division is the establishment of a talent pool, which aims to identify employees with high potential and prepare them for future leadership roles. With the talent pool in place, the company can implement job rotations more strategically, not only to fill vacant positions but also to develop a sustainable leadership cadre.

Based on the research findings, the implementation of job rotation in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk has great potential in increasing labour flexibility and operational productivity. However, for this policy to run optimally, improvements need to be made in several aspects, such as:

1. Formulation of a clearer and more uniform rotation policy standard across all operational units.
2. Improved communication and socialisation of the rotation programme to employees to reduce resistance to change.
3. Use of a data-driven approach in determining rotation candidates, taking into account individual experience, competencies and aspirations.
4. Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of rotation, to ensure that this strategy truly benefits both employees and the company.

The results of this study show that job rotation in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk has an important role in supporting operational effectiveness and HR development. However, the implementation of rotation still faces various challenges, ranging from employee resistance to the lack of uniform policy standards. To optimise the benefits of job rotation, the company needs to adopt a more strategic approach by balancing operational needs with individual development.

The establishment of talent pools and the implementation of regular evaluations are steps that can help improve the effectiveness of job rotation. Thus, this policy is not only a

short-term solution for operational needs, but also an important tool in employee career development and business sustainability.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that job rotation in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk has a strategic role in improving skills, preventing boredom, and broadening employee horizons. However, its implementation is still not optimally coordinated and tends to depend on the decisions of area leaders.

An employee aspiration-based approach has proven to be effective in increasing engagement and reducing resistance to rotation, thus having a positive impact on productivity. To support more data-driven decision-making, an employee mapping dashboard is a strategic solution that can help companies determine more targeted rotation policies.

In addition, the establishment of a talent pool is an important step in creating organisational sustainability, with a focus on developing future leadership. With the talent pool, companies can be more proactive in preparing human resources who are ready to face operational challenges in various regions.

Based on the research findings, there are several recommendations that can be applied to improve the effectiveness of job rotation in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk:

1. Integration of Rotation Policy with Central HR
 - Develop a rotation policy that is more structured and integrated with the company's HR development strategy.
 - Align the rotation programme with the business needs and long-term targets of the company.
2. Strengthening Evaluation and Monitoring
 - Increase post-rotation interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme and identify obstacles faced by employees.
 - Use the evaluation results as a basis for developing better rotation policies in the future.
3. Talent Pool Development
 - Accelerate the implementation of the talent pool to ensure the sustainability of the job rotation strategy.
 - Use the talent pool as a tool to identify and develop employees with leadership potential.
4. Communication Optimisation
 - Increase the socialisation of the benefits of rotation to employees to reduce negative perceptions and increase their readiness to face change.
 - Involve employees in rotation planning so that they feel they have a role in the decisions made, thereby increasing their motivation and involvement in the process.

By implementing these recommendations, it is expected that the position rotation programme in the Transport Division of PT SMART Tbk can be more structured, effective, and provide long-term benefits for both employees and the company.

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