

The Motives for Job-Hopping Among Millennial Employees in Bangkok: A Confirmatory Factors Analysis to Expand the Escape and Advancement Motives

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to study job-hopping motives among millennial employees in Bangkok. Data were collected from 528 millennial workers and analyzed using a second-order confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis on the job-hopping motives among employees in Bangkok showed that the model was consistent with the empirical data based on the goodness-of-fit indices, which included $\chi^2 = 49.369$, $df = 24$, $p = .0017$, RMSEA = .045, CFI = .979, TLI = .951, and SRMR = .031. These findings indicated that the motivation behind job-hopping consisted of three factors, namely the escape motive, advancement motive, and a new motive category. As for the new motives, the results indicated that millennial employees may switch jobs due to several reasons, such as considering the convenience of commuting and lodging, feeling fatigued with their current employment, or having a desire to start their own business. These results may be used in beneficial ways by organizations to develop human resource strategies to retain millennial employees.

Keywords: *Job-hopping, validation, millennial employees*

Introduction

Millennial workers have a tendency to switch jobs frequently. This generation consists of individuals who were born between 1980 and 2000 (Tetteh et al., 2021). Asghar (2014) found that millennials have unique and non-conventional beliefs, career goals, and motivations. Ivanovic and Ivancevic (2019) confirmed that the likelihood of millennials switching jobs increased among the younger generation. Generation Y is the group of millennials with the highest percentage of individuals who planned to leave their current job and with a likelihood of changing employers in the next two years. This trend of job-hopping (frequent job changes) among workers is likely to continue in the coming years, as the job market remains competitive and workers seek new opportunities for career growth and fulfillment.

In Thailand, the Research Center for Social and Business Development released survey results on the lifestyles and quality of life of millennial employees in Bangkok in 2018. The survey found that 55.2% of employees had changed jobs twice on average, with an average tenure of 3 years and 6 months. The millennials had a shorter average tenure of 2 years and 5 months compared to Generation X, which had an average tenure of 5 years and 5 months. This indicates a changing trend in the working culture of different generations, where younger generations tend to change jobs frequently to meet their own needs (aSearcher, 2023).

Job-hopping refers to the act of frequently changing jobs within a short period of time. This trend has become increasingly common among employees in recent years. According to a study conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average tenure of an employee in a job was 4.1 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). However, younger generations are known for job-hopping more frequently than their predecessors. Job-hopping is a result of various factors. One of the primary reasons is a shift in the work culture, where employees prioritize their personal growth and job satisfaction over job security and longevity (Steenackers & Guerry, 2016; Siew et al., 2023). Additionally, the emergence of the gig economy and the rise of contract work have contributed to the trend of job-hopping. This has led to a decline in employer loyalty towards their employees, and as a result, employees have started to look out for themselves (Best, 2017).

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The problem with job-hopping is that it can have a negative impact on an individual's career growth and long-term financial stability. Job-hopping can create gaps in an employee's resume, which can be perceived negatively by potential employers. Furthermore, the lack of longevity in a job can prevent an individual from acquiring specialized skills and knowledge, which can be detrimental to their career growth in the long run (Rasli et al., 2017; Zahari & Puteh, 2023). Moreover, job-hopping can lead to financial instability, as the individual may not have a steady income stream (Iftakhar, 2022). A challenge of job-hopping is for employers to retain their employees. Employers need to invest in creating a positive work culture that fosters employee engagement and loyalty (Kinasih & Amin, 2022; Zahari & Puteh, 2023).

Lake et al. (2018) conducted a study on the reasons behind job-hopping among employees; his instrument was developed and validated using responses from 221 students and 1,528 adults. In this study, it was found that the motivating factors for job-hopping were the escape motive and the advancement motive. However, it should be noted that in the study of employee behavior among millennials in Bangkok, the reasons for job-hopping may differ based on individual and societal factors. From the aforementioned, the present researchers studied job-hopping motives in order to use the knowledge gained for the benefit of managers, especially in the area of human resource management, in an effort to retain talented employees.

Literature Review

Lake et al. (2018) employed an inductive methodology approach and discovered two reasons behind job-hopping. One of these reasons, termed the "escape motive," was drawn from previous studies on organizational turnover, while the other, called the "advancement motive," was based on findings from the field of career psychology.

Escape Motives

The escape motive, as defined by Lake et al. (2018), referred to the desire of job hoppers to change jobs frequently in order to escape from unpleasant work environments. This motive shows similarities to the hobo syndrome (Ghiselli, 1974; Hall et al., 2022), where individuals moved from one job to another without any logical or organized reason. Hall et al. (2022) and Nguyen and Le (2022) found that negative affectivity, such as neuroticism, personality characteristics, and environmental factors, may have been related to the hobo syndrome and the escape motive. People with higher neuroticism scores tended to have negative perceptions of themselves and the world, which could have increased the likelihood of them leaving their job. It is important to note that motives are situational and time-bound, and are not identical to personality traits. Instead, motives and personality played different but important roles in regulating behavior and outcomes in life.

According to Lake et al. (2018), the escape motive was linked to impulsivity and negative affect, and was negatively associated with persistence, job involvement, time taken to decide to leave a job, and career self-efficacy. However, the hobo syndrome (and therefore the escape motive) was not directly related to impulsivity. Instead, individuals classified as hobos tended to score lower on the affective turnover motive and higher on other types of turnover motives, such as behavioral, contractual, and constituent motives. These motives were consistent with the impulsive quitter and conditional quitter profiles, which were characterized by negative feelings toward organizations and the tendency to leave one job without having another offer lined up (Nguyen & Le, 2022; Kerckhofs et al., 2022).

Advancement Motives

Lake et al. (2018) defined the advancement motive as the intention to switch jobs frequently in order to advance one's career. This type of motive was often referred to in the popular press as a positive outcome of changing jobs frequently. Guo and Hou (2022) suggested that people who frequently switched jobs did so to advance their careers, increase engagement in their work, and acquire new skills. It has been traditionally believed that turnover is influenced by tangible individual

and/or organizational rewards. For instance, Brannon et al. (2007) and Steil et al. (2020) found that employees who perceived greater career opportunities in their organizations were less likely to have intentions to leave.

Lake et al. (2018) suggested that the advancement motive was driven by personal ambition, initiative, and drive, which implied that individuals left their current job to advance their careers. This concept was supported by the work of Kost et al. (2020), who argued that upward mobility as a component of career motivation involved a desire for advancement, recognition, dominance, money, and the ability to delay gratification. Lake et al. (2018) revealed that the advancement motive was linked to persistence, self-directed career management, protean career values, a boundaryless mindset, and a kaleidoscope career, while it was negatively associated with impulsivity and normative organizational commitment. The quitters, who left their jobs to advance their careers or receive better compensation, usually had another job lined up before quitting. Individuals with a high score on the advance motive did not necessarily engage in job-hopping behavior compared to those with the escape motive. Instead, it was interaction between the advance motive and environmental variables that fulfilled their needs and drove their decisions to leave their current jobs (Nguyen & Le, 2022).

New Motives

Several factors have been identified as contributing to an individual's decision to change jobs. One of the most significant factors was the benefits provided by the company (Lake et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2020). These benefits included health insurance, retirement plans, and vacation time, which were highly valued by employees. A lack of these benefits might have prompted them to seek new employment opportunities.

Another factor that could have contributed to job-hopping was the distance between an employee's accommodation and their workplace. Commuting was a stressful and time-consuming experience that led to the dissatisfaction experienced by some, and that ultimately led to job-hopping (Ngotngamwong, 2019). Studies showed that longer commute times had negative effects on an individual's mental and physical health (Clark et al., 2020). Commuting also had a negative impact on work-life balance, as employees struggled to balance work demands with personal responsibilities such as childcare and household chores (Ngotngamwong, 2019; Clark et al., 2020).

Some individuals chose to leave their current job to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurship opportunities (Koster & Andersson, 2018). The reason for job-hopping was the desire for more autonomy and control over one's work life. According to a study conducted by Lanivich et al. (2021), individuals who had an entrepreneurial mindset tended to seek out more autonomy in their work. They may have felt limited by the constraints of working for a company, and desired to pursue their own ideas and projects. Job-hopping allowed individuals to explore different opportunities and gain diverse experiences, which could be valuable in their future entrepreneurial endeavors.

Another reason for job-hopping was the desire for greater financial gain. Individuals who were pursuing self-employment or entrepreneurship may have felt that they could achieve greater financial success through their own ventures rather than working for a company (Rodriguez et al., 2019). As such, they may have been more likely to job-hop in search of opportunities that could provide them with the financial resources to enable them to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Research Methodology

This research was a quantitative study and involved the development of research instruments, data collection, and data analysis; details are given in the following sections.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of employees who worked within the Bangkok metropolitan area, and the exact number was unknown. Therefore, a sample size of at least 385 individuals was required according to the guidelines for determining sample size for confirmatory factor analysis, which was 10 to 20 samples per parameter (Hair et al., 2019). There were 11 parameters in our research plan, so

the sample size fell between 110 to 220 individuals. However, in this study, the researchers used a sample group of 528 individuals, which was appropriate and sufficient to make references to the broader population.

The sample selected consisted of females (58.3%), while males comprised the remaining 41.7%. The age of the sample ranged from 20 to 40 years old, with the highest percentage being between 35–40 years old (39.8%), followed by 30–34 years old (26.5%), 25–29 years old (17.8%), and 20–24 years old (15.9%). In terms of education level, 39.4% had completed a bachelor's degree, 38.6% had a diploma, 17.0% had completed high school, 4.5% had an education level higher than a bachelor's degree, and the remaining 0.4% had completed primary education. With regard to job changes, within the past 2 years, 36.4% of the sample had changed jobs two times, while 18.2% had changed jobs three times, and the rest had changed jobs once.

Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used was a questionnaire consisting of three parts. Part 1 contained general information about the sample group. Part 2 consisted of 11 job-hopping motive items, including the escape motive and advancement motive. These items were developed based on Lake et al. (2018). The researchers reviewed other literature to create new questions under the name "New Motives." Part 3 was an open-ended question that provided respondents with the opportunity to express their opinions on the reasons for job-hopping.

The developed items were evaluated for content validity by three experts, using the Index of Content Validity approach, with all items meeting a minimum score of .67. However, for some items, the researchers made adjustments based on the experts' recommendations to improve the accuracy and completeness of the questions. Then the questionnaire was tested by conducting a tryout with a sample of 40 participants to assess its reliability by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results showed that the overall reliability of the questionnaire was .91, while the reliability of each subscale ranged from .68 to .92, meeting the accepted standard of at least .65 (Bonett & Wright, 2015).

Data Collection

Data were collected from a sample group at shopping and community malls in Bangkok, including Central Plaza Ladprao, Fashion Island Ram Inthra, The 9 Rama Square, Samyan Mitrtown, Terminal 21, Mega Bangna, Central Plaza Pinklao, The Mall Bangkae, The Circle Ratchapruk, and Siam Square One, during a period of 3 months from November 2022 to January 2023.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the general data of the sample using frequencies, percentages, and means, and conducted confirmatory factor analysis to examine the underlying factors of job-hopping among employees in Bangkok. The weight of each parameter was calculated using a Maximum Likelihood Estimation. The researchers interpreted the mean values by dividing them into levels using the interval method (Lionello et al., 2021). They established criteria for interpreting job-hopping motive levels into five categories as follows: Mean values between 4.21 and 5.00 indicated the Highest Level; those between 3.41 and 4.20 indicated a High Level; values between 2.61 and 3.40 indicated a Moderate Level; values between 1.81 and 2.60 indicated a Low Level; and mean values between 1.00 and 1.80 indicated the Lowest Level.

The researchers assessed the model fit by applying the Chi-square test (χ^2 -test), where statistical significance was set at the .05 level, and the ratio of χ^2/df was expected to be between one and five. Additionally, the researchers considered the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with a value greater than .95, the Tucker-Lewis Fit Index (TLI) with a value greater than .95, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with a value less than .05, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) with a value less than .05 to assess the model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; Dumronpanich, 2020).

Results

The scores for the means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis of job-hopping items are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that the highest job-hopping motive items were finding work that aligned with lifestyle, finding new work with better benefits, feeling uninterested in the current job which caused the need to change, finding a job that was suitable for oneself, discomfort from the supervisor leading to job changes, and finding the most satisfying job. As for the other five motive items, they were also high.

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis of Items

Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	Interpretation
Job is uninteresting, which causes the need to changes (jh1)	4.39	0.820	-1.25	.11	1.02	.21	Highest Level
Discomfort from the supervisor led to job changes (jh2)	4.27	0.818	-0.96	.11	0.50	.21	Highest Level
Feeling bored with doing the same work repeatedly led to changes (jh3)	4.03	0.907	-0.80	.11	0.37	.21	High Level
Dissatisfaction with the current work environment led to changes (jh4)	3.94	0.995	-0.62	.11	-0.38	.21	High Level
Willingness to change jobs in order to find the most satisfying job (jh5)	4.21	0.857	-1.14	.11	1.42	.21	Highest Level
Changing jobs to increase opportunities for higher positions (jh6)	3.95	0.949	-0.60	.11	-0.32	.21	High Level
Changing jobs to find a job that is suitable for oneself (jh7)	4.28	0.819	-1.05	.11	0.82	.21	Highest Level
Changing jobs to find work that aligns with lifestyle (jh8)	4.55	0.716	-1.77	.11	1.76	.21	Highest Level
Changing jobs to find new work with better benefits (jh9)	4.53	0.764	-1.66	.11	2.10	.21	Highest Level
Changing jobs with consideration for convenient commuting and lodging (jh10)	4.20	0.760	-0.82	.11	0.82	.21	High Level
Changing jobs due to being tired of being an employee and starting own business (jh11)	3.39	1.448	-0.27	.11	-1.38	.21	High Level

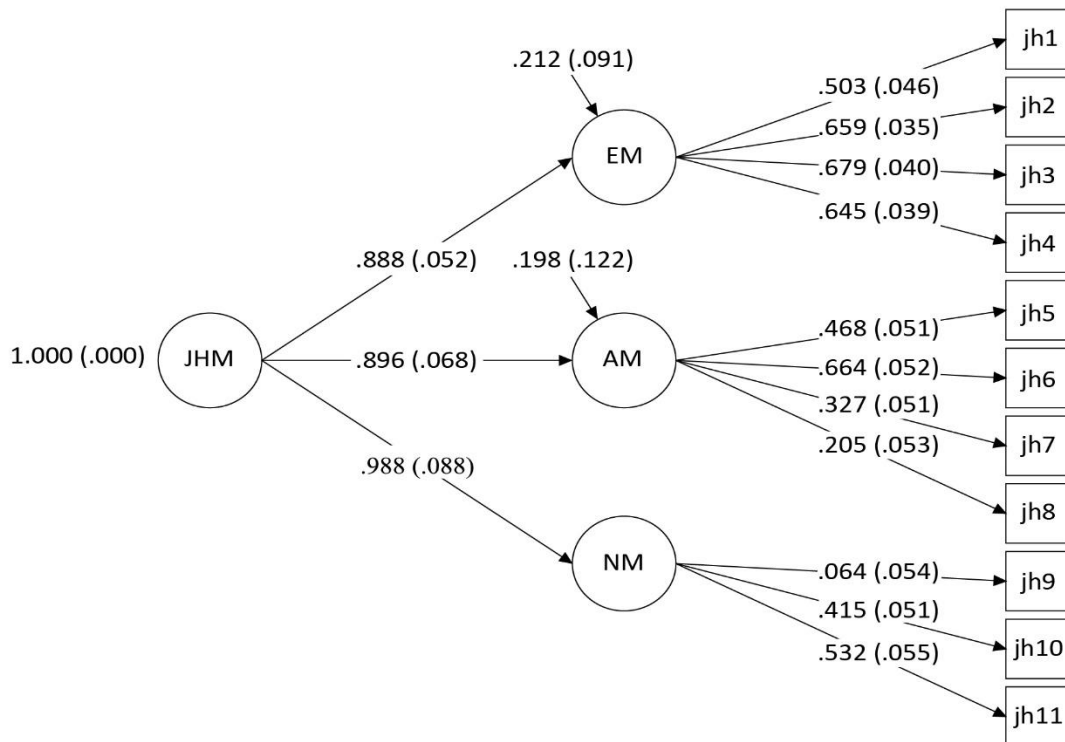
Findings dealing with the second-order confirmatory factor analysis of job-hopping among employees in Bangkok are displayed in Table 2 and Figure 1.

The results of the second-order confirmatory factor analysis on the job-hopping motives (JHM) among employees in Bangkok revealed that the model was consistent with the empirical data based on the goodness-of-fit indices, which included $\chi^2 = 49.369$, $df = 24$, $p = .0017$, RMSEA = .045, CFI = .979, TLI = .951, and SRMR = .031. It is worth noting that only the χ^2 value did not meet the criterion. However, considering that the ratio of χ^2/df was expected to be between one and five, the model adhered to the criterion. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model was consistent with the empirical data.

Table 2 Second Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Job-Hopping Among Employees In Bangkok

Second Order	β	SE	Z	p	R ²	t Order	β	SE	Z	p	R ²
Escape Motive (EM)	0.89	0.052	17.23	.000	.788	jh1	0.50	.046	10.93	.000	.253
						jh2	0.66	.035	18.82	.000	.434
						jh3	0.68	.040	17.19	.000	.461
						jh4	0.65	.039	16.41	.000	.416
Advancement Motive (AM)	0.90	0.068	13.21	.000	.802	jh5	0.47	.051	9.10	.000	.219
						jh6	0.66	.052	12.82	.000	.441
						jh7	0.33	.051	6.46	.000	.107
						jh8	0.21	.053	3.85	.000	.042
New Motive	0.99	0.088	11.18	.000	.976	jh9	0.06	.054	1.17	.241	.004
						jh10	0.41	.051	8.17	.000	.172
						jh11	0.53	.055	9.70	.000	.283

Figure 1 Second Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Job-Hopping Among Employees In Bangkok



The details of the factor loading (β) and the *R*-Square (R^2) revealed that the job-hopping motives factor loading values ranged from .888 to .988, ordered from the highest to the lowest weight as follows: new motives (NM), advancement motives (AM), and escape motives (EM), with the level of reliability (R^2) decreasing in ascending order.

For the first-order factor analysis, it can be seen that the job-hopping escape motives had factor loadings between .503 and .679, listed in descending order of importance as follows: Feeling bored with doing the same work repeatedly leading to changes (jh3), discomfort from the supervisor leading to job changes (jh2), dissatisfaction with the current work environment leading to changes (jh4), and a job that is uninteresting, which causes the need to change (jh1). As for the advancement motives, the factor loadings had values between .205 and .664, listed in descending order of importance as follows: Changing jobs to increase opportunities for higher positions (jh6), willingness to change jobs

to find the most satisfying job (jh5), changing jobs to find a job that is suitable for oneself (jh7), and changing jobs to find work that aligns with lifestyle (jh8).

In terms of new motives, it was found that the factor loadings ranged from .064 to .532, listed in descending order of importance as follows: Changing jobs due to being tired of being an employee and starting one's own business (jh11), changing jobs with consideration for convenient commuting and lodging (jh10), and changing jobs to find new work with better benefits (jh9). It is noteworthy that the jh9 factor did not show a significant correlation with job-hopping, indicating that the benefit package was not the reason for frequent job changes among millennial employees in Bangkok.

Discussion

The research findings indicated that escape motives and advancement motives were important components of job-hopping. This study confirmed the job-hopping motives scale (Lake et al., 2018). However, new motivations were discovered which included consideration of employees for convenient commuting and lodging, as well as some millennials who were tired of being employees and wished to start their own businesses. Confirmatory second-order factor analysis was utilized in this research; the data obtained confirmed the additional components of job-hopping motives identified in previous research.

In regards to the issues of commuting or distance between the place of residence and the workplace, it can be explained that employees consider the expenses incurred from commuting as well as the time spent. Longer commute times can be a major source of stress and frustration for employees, leading to job-hopping. Employers can take steps to address the issue of job-hopping caused by accommodation and commute distances. This can include offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, which can reduce the need for employees to commute long distances (Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2019). Moreover, employers can also consider offering incentives, such as transportation subsidies or reimbursement for relocation costs, to encourage employees to live closer to their workplaces (Schmidt & Duenas, 2002).

Job-hopping can also be driven by the desire for greater creativity and innovation. Millennials may feel that working for a company stifles their creativity, and that they can only fully express themselves through their own ventures (Friani & Mulyani, 2018). By job-hopping, they can seek out opportunities that allow them to work in more creative and innovative environments, or with companies that share their values and interests. However, it is worth noting that job-hopping can also have negative consequences. Frequent job changes can lead to a lack of stability and continuity in an individual's career path, which may be detrimental to their long-term career prospects (Tetteh et al., 2021).

Conclusions and Implications

Job-hopping motives consist of three factors: namely the escape motive, advancement motive, and an additional category of motives. The escape motive is influenced by aspects of the job, supervisor, and work environment, while the advancement motive is driven by a desire for job satisfaction, opportunities for career growth, and work that aligns with the lifestyle. As for the new motives category, the research suggested that millennial employees may leave their current jobs for various reasons, such as considering commuting and housing convenience, feeling burnt out, and having an interest in starting their own businesses. The findings from this study could be useful for organizations in developing human resource strategies to retain millennial employees.

There are several implications for human resource management or practices. First, organizations need to be aware of the different job-hopping motives that influence millennial employees' decisions to leave their current jobs. By understanding these motives, organizations can develop more effective human resource strategies to retain millennial employees. For example, they may need to provide a work environment that fosters job satisfaction, offers opportunities for career growth, and aligns with millennial lifestyles. Additionally, organizations may need to consider offering commuting and housing benefits as well as entrepreneurial opportunities to retain millennial employees. Overall, the findings

from this study highlight the importance of creating a work environment that meets the needs and desires of millennial employees in order to increase retention rates.

For future research, it is necessary to build upon the insights gained into the complex factors that drive employee job-hopping. To understand how to reduce employee job-hopping, it is important to examine the effectiveness of certain practices, such as remote work or flexible hours, which can alleviate the need for employees to travel long distances. For example, what types of flexible work arrangements are most effective in reducing job-hopping? Do certain industries or job types benefit more from remote work or flexible hours? How do flexible work arrangements impact employee satisfaction and productivity?

Additionally, future studies should explore the long-term impact of job-hopping on career progression, including how it affects an individual's potential for leadership roles and earning a higher salary. Moreover, research efforts could be used to explore whether job-hopping has different effects on career advancement depending on the industry or job type.

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