

## Job-Hopping Intention Among Lecturers in Private Education Institutions

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**Abstract:** The practice of frequently changing jobs known as job-hopping is increasingly prevalent across industries, including academia in search of better opportunities or personal growth. Due to this situation, it is more challenging for educational institutions, particularly in the private education sector to retain highly skilled lecturers in the organization. This study aims to identify the relationship between job-hopping intention among lecturers in private educational institutions and the factors that are job satisfaction, job motivation, psychological contract, and person-environment fit. Data was collected from 260 respondents across all KPTM branches through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 29. The findings show that strong psychological contract negatively influences job-hopping. On the other hand, job satisfaction, job motivation, and person-environment fit show no significant influence. This study not only provides a deeper understanding of job-hopping motivation but also gives valuable insight for policymakers to develop strategies and modules that enhance job satisfaction and retention among lecturers, especially in private education institutions.

**Keywords:** *Job-hopping Intention, Job Satisfaction, Job Motivation, Psychological Contract*

### 1. Introduction and Background

Employees stand out as vital assets within any organization, carrying the potential to shape the fate of the organization positively or negatively. Protecting their allegiance to the organization is vital, concurrently averting their inclination to actively explore alternative job prospects or opportunities elsewhere (Murali, Poddar & Seema, 2017). The standard models of prolonged employment have been disturbed by the emergence of job-hopping, characterized by frequent changes in employment. This trend, facilitated by the widespread availability of online job platforms, introduces fresh challenges for human resource management (Wider et al., 2023). The act of frequently changing jobs not only leads to the disappearance of valuable talent but also forces significant expenses on businesses for recruiting and training new personnel (Wider et al., 2023). Ghazali and Roslan (2020) coined the phrase 'job-hopping culture,' referring to a collective attitude within an organization that promotes individuals changing jobs or shifting to different organizations, thereby socially normalizing such conduct. In general, employers tend to perceive job-hopping in a negative light, as they highly value individual traits such as loyalty and long-term commitment. This has posed potential difficulties in the effective management of talent within many business organizations (Pandey, 2019).

Nowadays, frequent job-hopping has emerged as a prevalent and unavoidable issue, causing concern for both lecturers and employers in the private education sector (Selvanathan, 2019). Hence, retaining top talent among lecturers poses a considerable challenge (Bolden-Barrett, 2019). According to Feng and Angeline (2010), 2 interviews with parents, music students, teachers, and principals indicated that music schools commonly face a significant level of teacher turnover and frequent job-hopping. Currently, the widespread occurrence of job-hopping in the nation is causing significant worry, particularly within academic institutions. Numerous researchers and HR consultants have recognized the crucial role of workforce stability in ensuring the seamless functioning of any organization (Dhanapal et al., 2013). According to data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, young lecturers aged between 20 and 34 typically have an average tenure of only 2 to 3 years (Selvanathan et al., 2019).

According to Selvanathan et al. (2019), the average tenure of an American lecturer in the same position is 4.6 years. According to data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, young lecturers aged between 20 and 34 typically have an average tenure of only 2 to 3 years. Throughout the years, industries have grappled with turnover rates as a primary challenge. Drawing from past research conducted in the private sector,

numerous inquiries have arisen about the reasons behind employee turnover within organizations. The practice of job-hopping is not a recent phenomenon, but its prevalence is on the rise, primarily attributable to a constrained labor market experienced over the past several years. This occurred despite an inflation spike that adversely affected the real earnings of many individuals. Conversely, among those who stayed with the same employer, less than half of 47% encountered an augmentation in real earnings (Kochhar et al., 2022).

Job satisfaction is defined as a favorable emotion experienced by an individual in response to the circumstances of his workplace (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Previous studies by Ashton (2018) and Kashyap & Rangnekar (2016) demonstrate that work satisfaction influences employee turnover purpose. The job-hopping trend, which is anticipated to continue to grow and potentially weaken many private economic sectors, can be attributed to a variety of causes (Hom et al., 2017). Thus, job satisfaction can reflect several layers of emotions and employee situations, including their opinion of the organization's or company's attitude, which can influence employee conduct at work (Munir & Rahman, 2016). Moreover, job motivation that is related to job attitude is also found as the determinant of job-hopping intention as it impacts employees' desire to switch jobs to other organizations (Rivers, 2018). Job motivation is the emotional commitment an employee has to his or her work to complete it (Badubi, 2017). It is also considered that job motivation is how employees make decisions to achieve particular goals that will have a favorable impact on their productivity inside the firm (Kinasih, 2020). In addition, the psychological contract was also another factor that influenced job-hopping. Based on the 2013 SHRM report, The Society for Human Resource Management endorsed the opposition of employers by citing the trend of retiring Baby Boomers and the difficulty in attracting and retaining competent workers in recent years. According to Yuen (2016), found that employees aren't loyal to their companies because they believe "the psychological contract is dead." This means they do not believe they must remain loyal and raise within one company. Furthermore, Rivers (2018) highlighted that if an employee's psychological contract is broken, they will be less committed to the organization. Likewise, person-environment fit was very crucial for someone to stay longer in their workplace. Person-environment fit signified that a person was compatible with his or her environment because his or her characteristics were comparable to those of the other people in the environment (Ahmad, 2017). Those who adapt to the organization's culture, environment, and people are less likely to switch professions as they experience person-organization fit that makes them feel motivated and at ease in the workplace (Siew et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction, job motivation, psychological contract, and person-environment fit toward job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

## 2. Literature Review

**Job-Hopping Intention:** Job-hopping is a behavior in which employees tend to jump from one occupation to another in a short period to enhance their possibilities for professional development and personal advancement (Khatri et al., 2001). Although it provides benefits for employees to accumulate and expand their skill sets and capabilities by gaining experience in various positions, employees who regularly transfer employment are viewed as disloyal, reckless and uncommitted to the organization (Siew et al., 2021). Job-hopping become a major concern of organizations since it would cause a shortage of talent and disruption in human management functions such as selection, training and development, human resource planning and the achievement of organizational objectives might be jeopardized (Lee et al., 2019).

According to Pranaya (2014), employees who frequently change jobs within two years voluntarily are considered job-hoppers. A study conducted by Sullivan & Baruch (2009) found that young people are more likely to engage in job-hopping as they are interested in gaining a diverse range of working experiences in a variety of industries to broaden their skill set and expertise for career advancement. This condition is explained by the hobo syndrome which refers to an employee's tendency to frequently change employers (Ghazali et al., 2018). It is comparable to job hopping, where individuals exhibiting hobo syndrome prioritize switching companies rather than seeking new roles within their current organization (Rivers, 2018). The primary motivations for job-hopping include the pursuit of a perfect fit between individual and organizational culture, professional progression, and work-life balance (Tetteh et al., 2021; Pranaya, 2014).

There are two reasons for job-hopping behaviors. Some employees engage in frequent job changes due to some irrational reason. However, employees mostly engage in job-hopping for better career development. The influence of social support and shared beliefs among co-workers encourages individual employees to search for better jobs and career opportunities elsewhere (Akmal et al., 2017). Job-hopping is viewed as a better way for career advancement which will lead to better pay and benefits as well as fulfilling one's personal and professional goals (Yuen, 2016).

Given the varied interpretations of job-hopping, this study focuses specifically on job-hopping intention as it is defined as the willingness of employees to voluntarily leave their current organization for another organization. Intention is a precursor to behavior thus, it is the most important indicator of whether an individual will decide to engage in a particular behavior (Kinasih, 2020). The subsequent sections will examine four key factors influencing job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

**Job Satisfaction:** Robbins & Judge (2018) define job satisfaction as a positive feeling about one's employment that results from an appraisal of own features of the job and the company. It is a measurement of how well the organization provides things that the employee considers important to achieve high productivity and develop an effective emotional response to various aspects of the job (Bangun et al. 2019). Job satisfaction is related to the feeling of contentment with one's work which is influenced by an individual's self-evaluation of their current position and environment (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2002). Studies also found that it is a crucial indicator that affects employees' moods, attitudes and happiness toward their employment in general and acts as a foundation of organizational commitment (Locke, 1976; Sempane et al., 2002).

A high level of job satisfaction hurts withdrawal cognitions which include thoughts of quitting, intent to search for alternatives, and decisions to quit. In contrast, Employees who have persistently low levels of job satisfaction may be more likely to engage in job-hopping behavior and to find new employment (Huang & Zhang, 2013). While job satisfaction itself is a complex factor, it is possible to measure employee job satisfaction by their perceptions and expectations. As a result of this, numerous researchers have stated that job satisfaction has an influence on the employee's productivity and performance at work, as well as absenteeism, retention, and staff turnover (Sageer et al., 2012). Several factors influence employees' level of satisfaction which include the work itself, salary, supervision, relationship with co-workers and promotion opportunities (Robbins & Judge 2018).

Research consistently highlights the crucial role of job satisfaction on employee retention and job-hopping intention. Rivers (2018) found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and factors like salary, work environment, interpersonal relationships and job roles. There is evidence that job satisfaction regularly and significantly correlates with employee retention or job-hopping intention. It was discovered that low job satisfaction is a factor in quitting intentions. Low job satisfaction has negative effects on employee motivation, absenteeism, productivity, and intrinsic work values. In addition, a study conducted by Huang & Zhang (2013) found a link between low job satisfaction and increased job-hopping intention. Employees experiencing chronic job satisfaction are more likely to engage in job-hopping intention and potentially to locate new employment. Essentially, job satisfaction reflects an employee's overall positive emotional state derived from their work experiences, influencing their commitment, engagement, and ultimately their decision to stay with or leave an organization. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** There is a relationship between job satisfaction and job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

**Job Motivation:** Job motivation is defined as the emotional attachment an employee has to his or her work to complete it (Badubi, 2017). Job motivation acts as the driving force behind an employee's commitment and effort towards their work. With an appropriate incentive, it can significantly enhance employee performance (Jalagat, 2016). According to Kinasih (2020), an employee with high job motivation will make conscious decisions to achieve specific goals that will benefit both themselves and their organization. Moreover, job satisfaction was found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction. While job motivation derives from future expectations employees have towards their job, job satisfaction or job happiness on the other hand arises from past experiences and events (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017).

Job motivation has a significant impact on employee performance and intention to leave. Thus, it is important to understand the factors that lead to employees' job motivation. Millennials, in particular, prefer meaningful jobs, competitive compensation packages, a positive working environment, opportunities for growth professionally and flexible work arrangements. Rivers (2018) suggests that job motivation directly influences employees' decision to stay or leave the organization. Employees' productivity and performance will significantly decline when their level of job motivation is reduced. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

**H2:** There is a relationship between job motivation and job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

**Psychological Contract:** Psychological contracts explain the employer-employee expectation in their employment relationship in which employees attempt to fulfill their duties in exchange for the organization meeting their wants (Kinasih, 2020). The Social Exchange Theory supports the psychological contract, which suggests that workers and firms engage in exchanges in which one side reciprocates the contributions of the other (Blau, 1964). Psychological contract theory is a two-dimensional (relational and transactional) paradigm that encompasses the perceived promises made by the employer (Rousseau, 2011). The relational dimension relates to an emotional component that focuses on mutual trust and loyalty. This highlights the importance for organizations to cultivate mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with their employees. By providing opportunities for professional growth, training, and job security, organizations can foster loyalty and commitment among their employees (Ma'amor et al., 2014). On the other hand, the transactional dimension is related more to monetizable and materialistic elements including pay and working conditions. Both components of the psychological contract hypothesis are essential because they link employee expectations to job satisfaction, hence lowering potential turnover (Bal and Kooij, 2011; Rousseau, 2011).

Understanding psychological contracts will benefit organizations to attract and retain employees. Gaining knowledge of employees' varying expectations regarding contributions and rewards can be advantageous to an organization's ability to motivate its employees (Low et al., 2016). Employees expect career-related benefits from the organization such as competitive compensation, as well as career and development opportunities. Fulfilling this expectation enables an organization to ensure employees' commitment, performance, satisfaction and intention to remain as organization members thus, reducing the job-hopping intention (Rivers, 2018). This is in line with the norm of reciprocity, when an organization does not fulfill its promises and responsibilities, employees experience a psychological contract breach thus leading to disappointment, frustration and rage. In this situation, employees will modify their contributions to the organization, which might lead to a diminishing of job performance and increase the potential of job-hopping intention (Gouldner, 1960; Maia & Bastos, 2015; Lub et al., 2016). Moreover, a study conducted among academicians in Turkish universities revealed that psychological contract breaches perceived by academicians will increase the feeling of anger and betrayal then further lead to a reduced sense of organizational attachment (Buyukyilmaz, & Cakmak, 2013). Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

**H3:** There is a relationship between psychological contracts and job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

**Person-environment Fit:** Person-environment fit exists when the characteristics of the employee and the work environment are well matched (Krishnan et al., 2014). Person-environment fit refers to employees who seek a match between their characteristics and those of their workplace (Vianen, 2018). Employees tend to work with organizations that can match their talents, hobbies, and personal values, in addition to business culture and procedures (Niki, 2017).

Two perspectives describe person-environment fit: supplementary fit and complimentary fit. The complementary fit means that the term fit focuses on the similarities between the individuals and the members of the organization, whereas complementary fit means that the individuals are contributing their skills to fill the gaps in the organization; it can also be referred to as person-job fit (Kerse 2018). Person-environment compatibility includes numerous dimensions that are typically addressed about values and objectives. Because values are seen as the foundation of an individual's identity and commitment, they frequently play a significant influence in determining attitudes, judgments, or even behavior, making them the most influential factor in defining person-organizational compatibility. By adding the organization's value, it is stated that there will be

a higher level of person-environment fit in the organization, thereby extending the value of individuals to the organization and demonstrating a similar value orientation between the two (Abdalla et al., 2018).

According to Ghazali and Roslan (2020), the work environment is one of the factors that influences employees' job-hopping intention. A stressful working environment, task overload, hostile superiors, and extended working hours may increase the potential of job-hopping intention. However, when there is a good fit between employee's interests and the role they play within the organization, the employee is more likely to remain in their current position. On the other hand, if their interests and their profession do not coincide, there is a greater possibility that the employee may leave the organization in search of work that better suits their interests. This study shows that person-environment fit can help improve organizational performance. This is because employees who experience person-environment fit tend to feel more satisfied and reduce burnout and anxiety which in the end reduces the potential of job-hopping intention. Thus, the hypothesis is presented as follows.

**H4:** There is a relationship between person-environment fit and job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions.

### 3. Research Methodology

A correlation study was conducted to identify the influence of job satisfaction, job motivation, psychological contract and person-environment fit toward job-hopping intention among lecturers in private education institutions. The population of this study consists of lecturers from Kolej Poly-Tech MARA (KPTM) with a total number of 550 lecturers. The questionnaire survey was used as the instrument for data collection utilizing the 5-point Likert Scale for dependent variable (DV) and independent variable (IV) sections. Questionnaire items for Job Satisfaction, Job motivation, Psychological Contract, Person-environment Fit and Job-hopping Intention were adopted from Kinasih (2020). Non-probably sampling was used in which a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to lectures at KPTM collage from 8 branches through email. With a 65% return rate, a total of 260 questionnaires were analyzed in SPSS version 29. The analyses carried out for this research are descriptive demographic analysis, correlation and regression analysis.

### 4. Results

The outcome of the data analysis is presented in this section. This includes the discussion of the demographic profile of respondents, as well as the results for reliability, correlation and regression analysis.

**Profile of Respondents:** Table 1 displays a summary of the demographic profile of respondents. Frequency analysis was used to examine respondent's demographic characteristics which include gender, age, education level, length of service, and monthly income level. Based on the analysis, the majority of the respondents were female which represented 51.9% (n=135), followed by males (48.1%, n=215). Most of the respondents were between 26-35 years old (44.2%), while 87 respondents (33.5%) were between 36-41 years old. Meanwhile, the lowest frequency of age group was 58 respondents (22.3%) between 20-25 years old. In terms of the highest education level, 134 respondents hold a bachelor's degree which represents 51.5% followed by a master's degree (n=94, 36.2%) and a Doctor of Philosophy (n=32, 12.3%). A total of 97 respondents (37.3%) have been working in KPTM for 4-6 years. Another 82 of the respondents (31.5%) have been working for 7 years and above, while 74 respondents (28.5%) have working experience ranging from 1-3 years. The remaining 7 respondents (2.7%) just recently joined this organization which is less than 1 year old. The highest frequency of income level was income level between RM2,001-RM3,000 which was represented by 87 respondents (33.5%). This if followed respectively by income level range between RM3,001- RM5,000 (n=76, 29.2%), RM5,001-RM7,000 (n=67, 25.8%) and above RM7,001 (n=30, 11.5%).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile**

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>GENDER</b>		
Males	125	48.1%
Females	135	51.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100%</b>



<b>AGE</b>		
20-25	58	22.3%
26-35	115	44.2%
36-41	87	33.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>		
Bachelor's Degree	134	51.5%
Master's Degree	94	36.2%
Doctor of Philosophy	32	12.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>LENGTH OF SERVICE</b>		
Less than 1 year	7	2.7%
1-3 years	74	28.5%
4-6 years	97	37.3%
7 years and above	82	31.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>MONTHLY INCOME LEVEL</b>		
RM2,001 - RM3,000	87	33.5%
RM3,001 - RM5,000	76	29.2%
RM5,001 - RM7,000	67	25.8%
RM7,001 above	30	11.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Reliability Analysis:** Reliability analysis was conducted to measure the consistency of the items used in this study. According to Malhotra (2004), Cronbach's Alpha value that is higher than 0.6 indicates a strong association. Based on Table 2, it is shown that Cronbach's Alpha value for job-hopping intention is 0.889 indicating the items used to measure this variable are strongly reliable. Meanwhile, the alpha values for other variables also showed a strong reliability with the values of 0.797 (job satisfaction), and 0.782 (job motivation), 0.830 (psychological contract) and 0.791 (person-job fit).

**Table 2: Result of Correlation and Reliability Analysis**

No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Job Satisfaction	4.086	0.545	(0.797)				
2.	Job Motivation	4.247	0.481	0.728**	(0.782)			
3.	Psychological Contract	4.132	0.641	0.813**	0.717**	(0.830)		
4.	Person-environment Fit	4.572	0.511	0.637**	0.655**	0.711**	(0.791)	
5.	Job-hopping Intention	2.267	0.813	-0.482**	-0.448**	-0.512**	-0.452**	(0.889)

Notes: \*\*significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); Cronbach's alpha values are shown in the parentheses.

**Correlation Analysis:** Referring to Table 2, the result of the correlation analysis indicated a significant negative association between job-hopping intention and job satisfaction. The result showed a moderate negative association with  $r=-0.482$  ( $p<0.01$ ). Similarly, there is also a significant negative association between job-hopping intention and job motivation that indicated with moderate negative association between the variables ( $r=-0.488$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, the association between job-hopping intention and psychological contract also indicates a significant relationship with the  $r$  value is  $-0.512$  ( $p<0.01$ ) which shows a moderate negative association. The result also revealed a significant association between job-hopping intention and person-environment fit with the value of  $r=-0.452$  ( $p<0.01$ ) indicating a moderate and negative association between the variables.

**Table 3: Model Summary of Regression Analysis**

Summary		ANOVA	
R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.
0.290 <sup>a</sup>	0.279	26.021	.001 <sup>b</sup>

**Regression Analysis:** Regression analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between independent variables (job satisfaction, job motivation, psychological contract and person-environment fit) and dependent variables (job-hopping intention). Based on Table 3, the R<sup>2</sup> value (0.290) indicated that 29% of the variance in the independent variables attributed to the dependent variable while the remaining 71% of the variance attributed to the dependent variable came from other factors that were not included in this study.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficient Analysis**

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Job Satisfaction	-.132
Job Motivation	-.087
Psychological Contract	-.245*
Person-environment Fit	-.137

Dependent variable: Job-hopping Intention

The regression result in Table 4 shows that only one variable namely psychological contract showed a significant relationship with job-hopping intention with the value of  $\beta = -.245$  with  $p < 0.05$ . This finding indicates that psychological contract has a significant negative influence on job-hopping intention. On the other hand, job satisfaction, job motivation and person-environment fit do not influence job-hopping intention.

**Discussion:** The findings from this study revealed that only H3 was accepted, while H1, H2 and H4 were rejected. Only psychological contract has a significant negative influence on job hopping intention among lecturers at KPTM. It is indicated that the stronger the psychological contract experience by lecturers, the lower the tendency for them to have job-hopping intentions. When lecturers experience a fulfillment of their expectations within their psychological contract, it fosters loyalty and encourages them to remain committed to the organization. This is in line with Hassan et al., (2017) who emphasize that psychological contracts are closely connected to the trustworthiness of the organization. Once an employee establishes a psychological contract, they are likely to experience a higher sense of belonging or ownership about their job, consequently enhancing commitment. Additionally, Hammouri et al. (2022) argue that universities that fulfill their obligation promise to their academic employees will experience lower turnover in return.

### 5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

This study expands our understanding of how factors like job satisfaction, job motivation, psychological contract and person-environment fit influence job-hopping intention among lecturers at KPTM. This study provides evidence that increased psychological contracts will reduce job-hopping intention thus helping organizations in retaining their talents. Thus, for an organization to reduce potential job-hopping intention, understanding factors that influence psychological contracts is crucial as it can be used as guidelines to revisit and develop suitable organization policies, culture, compensation packages and job-related environment that will increase employees' productivity, commitment and loyalty to the organization.

**Conclusion:** As we have seen, it is a common struggle for organizations nowadays to retain their talents due to various factors including industry competition and increased employees' expectations. This study suggested that psychological contract plays an important role in influencing job-hopping intention. As the result indicates a negative relationship between these variables, thus it implies the need for organizations to focus on ways to fulfill employees' expectations to ensure their commitment and loyalty to the organization. This study contributed to a better understanding of the condition under which psychological contracts significantly influence employees' job-hopping intention.

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